

Articles
**ARTICLES
OF
ENQUIRY,**

Exhibited by the

Right Reverend Father in God,

WILLIAM,

W. Jones By Divine Permission

W. Fleetwood
Lord Bishop of St. Asaph,

To the Church-wardens and Side-men
of every Parish within his Diocese, at
his Primary VISITATION.

With some Remarks and Observations on
the PARTICULARS.

Printed in the Year M DCC X.



*The Tenour of the Oath to be Admini-
strated to the Church-wardens and
Side-men.*

YOU shall Swear, That you will
diligently Enquire, and true Pre-
sentment make, of all Defaults and Of-
fences committed in your Parish, against
the Ecclesiastical Laws of this Realm,
to the best of your Skill and Know-
ledge.

So help you God.



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ARTICLES

OF

ENQUIRY, &c.

To the CLERGY of the Diocese
of St. ASAPH.

I Ntending, if it please God, to visit my Diocese this Summer ensuing, I have spent a little time in considering how to make such *Visitation* easiest to myself and Clergy, and best to answer the Purposes and Ends of it. The Bishop's *Charge*, I have observ'd, has usually been a tiresome thing to him himself, and taken up much more time than could be well allowed on such Occasions. This Trouble I have spared both myself and you, by sending to you before-hand, what I should have most insisted on, had I tarried till the time of delivering it by word of mouth. By this Method, I shall also avoid the frequent Repetition of the same things, in several places, which is truly tedious and uneasy: and shall not run the hazard of saying many things unseasonably, by saying them *everywhere*, which

would be only pertinent and proper, in *this* or *that* particular *Deanry*. Thus, you see, I have consulted my own Ease; but not, I hope, without your Convenience also. I have saved my self the trouble of connecting the particular Observations I have made, which in a general Discourse I must have done; but then I have also made it easy for you to apply what I have said, to the right place; and given you more time to consider and digest, with your *Church-wardens*, the *Presentments* proper to be made. In a word, the Method I have taken, I judged would be most convenient for our Common Service, without considering how it would be received, as singular, and unusual. And yet (that I may not be thought to have chalked out a Way peculiar to my self, and to affect unbeaten Paths) the antientest Form of an *Episcopal Visitation*, that, I believe, is extant, and which *Baluzius* hath printed, at the end of his *Notes upon Regino*, pag. 602. manifestly shews, that the Bishop did not always read his *Charge* (which is there call'd his *Admonitio*) himself, but delivered it to a *Deacon* to read it aloud, in the Bishop's Name and Stead, to the Clergy that were then and there assembled. 'Tis above 900 Years old, and therefore it may be worth the while, to give you the *Title*, and the Beginning of it—the *Title* is, — *Admonitio Synodalis antiqua, à Diacono post Evangelium legenda; Episcopo, & ceteris in ordine sedentibus*. They had no *Sermon* then, but *Prayers*, *Psalms*, *Epistle*, and *Gospel*. And then followed the *Admonition*, of which this is the Beginning. *Fratres Presbyteri, & Sacerdotes Domini, Cooperatores Ordinis nostri estis. Nos quidem, quamvis indigni, locum Aaron tenemus, Vos autem locum Eleazari, & Ithamaris. Nos vice duodecim Apostolorum fungimur, Vos ad formam Septuaginta Discipulorum estis. Nos vera Pastores Ve-*
stri

stri sumus, Vos autem Pastores animarum vobis Commis-
sarum. Nos de Vobis Rationem reddituri sumus, Pastori
Domino nostro Jesu Christo, Vos de Plebibus vobis com-
missis: & ideo, Carissimi, videte periculum vestrum.
Ammonemus itaque, & obsecramus Fraternitatem ve-
stram, ut quæ vobis suggerimus, memoria commendetis,
& opere exercere studeatis. And then follow the parti-
 cular Injunctions he lays upon them, which are too long
 for this place. I only transcribe thus much, to justify
 the Method I take: for I think it full as good, for eve-
 ry Clergy-man to read my *Charge* at home beforehand,
 as to hear a *Deacon* read it, or *Myself*, at our Meeting;
 especially since by these Means, he may read it again
 and again at his Leisure, as I hope, and ought to hope,
 he will. The *Articles of Enquiry* (which the Antients
 also called *Inquisitio*) are, generally, the same with
 those of my Honoured Predecessor, Dr. *Beveridge*, ex-
 cepting that some new Occurrences have occasioned some
 few Additions, and some little Alterations. They will
 be, on that score, as more familiar, so more acceptable
 to you; and I am truly glad to find the Memory of so
 excellent a Man, both for his Piety and Learning, so
 precious with you. May we, all of us, profit our selves
 of his good Example!

T I T L E

TITLE I.

Concerning the Clergy.

1. **D**O TH your Minister reside upon his Benefice ?

1. The *Residence* of a Clergyman upon his *Benefice*, appears so reasonable and fit, that whensoever it is, for any considerable time, interrupted, a good Man does not (I believe) so often recur to the *Dispensation* of his lawful Superiors, for the Satisfaction of his Mind therein, as to his own Conscience, to know whether that Dispensation be duly and rightly applied. He doubts not of the Reasonableness and Justice of such a Power, to make such Laws, and to distribute such Indulgencies, where needful, but he will make himself the Judge, whether he is himself a proper Subject of such favour ; and if he find not his Necessities of Absence and Non-Residence, to be just and true, and very pressing, his Heart reproaches him, even when he has his *Seals* and *Licence* in his Closet: He knows the Law is there ill used, the Judge mistaken, and himself faulty, and accountable to his great Lord and Master, tho' dispens'd with here on Earth, and freed from Punishment. The very nature of his Undertaking shews him this ; the Obligations he has laid himself under, with such solemnity, to God in his *Ordination*, and to his Bishop at his *Institution*, have strictly bound it on his Soul: And from this Burthen, nothing but good Reasons, and true Necessities can disengage him.

A Clergyman's *Parish* is, in some sort, his House and Home; there is his Business, there his Family; there all his Time, his Care, his Pains and Diligence should be expended: And I call every Man's Heart to witness, whether, the more Months he lives in his Parish, the more Duty he performs in it, the more care he takes of it, he does not think himself the more approved of God and of all good Men, and of his own Conscience, and does not think he shall give a more joyful account of his Charge in the Day of Judgment. I would therefore intreat all those, with whom I am concern'd, to consider seriously, what Profit, or what Pleasure, can ballance the Satisfaction of approving themselves to God, their own Consciences, and all good Men, by living among their People, as much as possibly they can, and doing them what good lies in their Power, both by their Doctrine and Example. And I hope no Body, for the future, will either, without my leave, absent themselves from their *Cures*, for any long time; or obtain my leave, by false Excuses, and such Pretences, as they know are groundless, tho' I cannot see through them; And I, the rather say this, because, I doubt, there are some *Rectors* who think themselves at liberty to absent themselves, because not tied, by Oath, to Continual Residence, as *Vicars* are. I assure them, this is but an Imaginary Liberty; and the 21 H. VIII. cap. 13. may instruct them better.

2. Doth he dwell in his Parsonage or Vicarage-House?

2. Residence, doth ordinarily suppose the Minister to live in his proper House: But *this Enquiry* supposes it may be otherwise. I am sorry to hear that some of the
Clergy

Clergy of this Diocese, have no House at all of their own to live in; and that Others have such as cannot possibly receive their Families, and are therefore constrain'd to live in hired Ones. I can think of applying no other Remedy to these Evils past, but warning those who are concern'd, to take more care for the future of their Houses; that they suffer them not, for want of a little charge and care at present, to grow daily worse and worse, till at last they come to such a pass that they despair of mending them; and the next Successor finds them on the ground, and is neither able to build them himself, nor to recover any thing towards the doing it, from a poor helpless Widdow, or insolvent Executor. By these ways, a tolerable House becomes a mean one, and a mean one falls into Ruine. Wherever therefore the proper House is not sufficient to receive the Incumbent and his Family, I shall expect, and will exact with more than usual strictness, that the House be kept in very good Repairs. But where it is possible, I hope to find every Incumbent in his proper House, and taking all due care both to sustain it and amend it. This is what the Clergy owe in Justice to their Successors, because they either received it from their Predecessors, or thought themselves injured in not receiving it.

3. If he be not there himself, hath he a Curate allowed of by *the Bishop*, always residing among you?

3. The Residence of a Minister on his Benefice is so necessary, that whenever his Business calls and keeps him from it, his Absence is to be supplied with a Curate, who is in all Respects to discharge the Office of the Incum-

Incumbent, and is to be allowed of by the Bishop, *i. e.* he is not to be Curate, unless allowed of by the Bishop. There are some Reasons for which a Bishop *may*, with safety, reject a *Clerk* presented to him, by the Patron; but there are many other Reasons for which a Bishop *would* reject a Clerk, if he could do it without trouble and danger of the Law. But a *Curate* is so absolutely within the Bishop's Power, that none can be admitted as such, or entertain'd, without his Approbation and Allowance; not his Connivance or Permission only, but his Examination and his *License*; And therefore when the Laws allow of Pluralities and Non-Residence, for fear of what Miscarriages and Mischiefs might ensue from thence, they leave it in the Bishop's Power to prevent all damage to the Church, and to supply all defects of absence, by putting in such Curates as they shall judge Faithful and able to discharge the Office of Incumbents, and also have empowered them to appoint those Curates their *Rewards*.

4. Doth he Read the whole Prayers of the Church distinctly and devoutly every *Sunday*, and every time the People are assembled for that purpose?

4. A Minister is not at liberty to use, or to refuse, what Prayers he pleases, in the *Publick Service*, but must be govern'd by the *Rubrick*; Men may, and must, be left to their Discretion, in things *doubtful*; but where there is a *Rule*, a modest Man will not be wise *above* it, and much less *against* it. But there are few, I hope, that

want this Caution. I would to God, there were as few concern'd in the next part of this Enquiry, which is, *Whether they read the Prayers distinctly and devoutly?* I have often wondred, how it should come to pass, that so great a part of the Ministerial Office, as *Reading Prayers* in publick is, should take up so little of our Care and Study as it seems to do, and be so little considered by Us, which, were it well performed, would tend as much to our own, and to the edification of our Audience, as any thing we can do; which is, I dare say, the Desire and Aim of every good Clergyman. I own, that a good Voice, sweet Cadence, and a graceful manner, in reading, fall not to every Bodies share; nor are they to be acquired by Art and Study; they are rather Gifts of Nature, and improvable by Care and Observation; but many who have them, either totally neglect them, or misuse them strangely by an excess of Affectation. But they who have them not, can yet read Prayers *distinctly and devoutly*; in this we ask nothing but what is in every One's Power to do, with a little Care and Attention; and I am sure it is their Duty. The Minister, in the Publick Service, is, as it were, the Mouth of the Congregation. His Voice is to reach the Ears, and to direct the Hearts of all his Audience, to their proper Object, at that time; and I will venture to affirm, that much of their Devotion will depend upon the way and manner of his uttering forth his Prayers and Praises. The *Psalms*, and *Hymns*, and *Chapters*, are clearly other things, when read distinctly and devoutly, from what they are when read in haste and unattentively. Much of their Efficacy will, I know, depend upon the Temper and good Disposition that Men bring along with them to Church, on these Occasions; but still, I say, the People will not fail of being more
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or less affected, with this Service, as it is more or less distinctly and devoutly uttered and performed by the Minister. And therefore all their Care will be well employed, in studying to do it in the best manner that is possible. To read *too loud*, is to disturb the Devotion of the Audience, and draws them only to guessing what's the matter, and what is the occasion of exerting above what is needful: Men, in great Noises, cannot think at all, but are unfix'd, and in much confusion. To read *too low*, is to lose the end of Reading, which is to be heard and understood; it strains the attention too much, and when Men have long listned to little purpose, they presently give themselves up to think of other matters. To read *too fast*, is to lose one's own Attention, and to outrun all other Peoples; the Mind has not leisure to consider and dwell on what is said; the Ear does only take in Words and Sound, but nothing is communicated to the Heart; there is not time for it; and then, you may be sure there is no Devotion; for Devotion is, in this case, the Assenting of the Heart to what is heard by the Ears, and the being pleasantly moved with it. It is as if a Messenger should deliver his Errand whilst he is riding Post by you. You hear him say something, but what it is, you know not, and so it is as if he had said nothing at all. This quick dispatch of Prayers gives great Offence, in many kinds. It makes those, who dislike our *Forms*, continue on their prejudice against them; they fancy there is no Devotion in the *Speaker*, and they are sure the *Hearers* cannot edify by them, not being able to attend to them duly, and go along with them in the grave manner that they should. It looks like Disrespect to the *Congregation*, as well as to the *Service* it self, to see Men hastning to an End of it, in so unseemly a manner, as if

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they

they longed to have it over, and had something better to do afterwards. The reading Prayers *too fast*, is the fault that is most generally charged upon the Clergy, and therefore I insist upon it most, in order to its being mended, because it cannot, in truth, be done either with *Distinction*, or *Devotion*. But there is also something amiss in reading *too slow*, which is the other Extrem, but which not many, in comparison, fall into. The Attention, if it is not duly fed, and entertained, is lost; when People know beforehand what you are to say, they are impatient till it is deliver'd; and if you stay beyond your time, their Expectation becomes uneasy; they run before you in their Minds; but their Devotion is hereby disturb'd, and scattered. You may utter your *Sermons*, with what degree of Slowness and Deliberation, you shall think fit, because, not knowing what you have to say, Men will expect with Patience. But in reading *Prayers*, with which they are well acquainted, you must, generally speaking, keep that decent middle Pace to which they are mostly accustomed, or else you will be in danger of having your Audience either overrun you, or not overtake you; either of which quite spoils the end of Publick Prayer. I would not multiply Rules, and Observations of this kind; most People will do best in following *Nature* in their Voice and Utterance; consulting *Reason* in Accents and in Cadence; and Common *Custom* in the Quantities of *proper* Names, and Words that are of doubtful pronunciation. But then a Clergyman will read the Prayers best when he perceives he reads himself and his Audience, into a serious and devout Attention to the good things delivered by him.

5. Doth he Preach every Sunday, either in the *English* or *British* Tongue?

5. Custom, I hear, has, in some places of this Diocese, prevail'd, to the Disuse of *Weekly* Sermons, so that they have Preaching but once in a *Fortnight*, or *Three Weeks*. Such Custom, I am sure, must have proceeded from the Faultiness or Negligence of former Incumbents; and I hope the present ones will not indulge it any longer. I do utterly disclaim the encouraging any such ill Practice; nay, I require it at the hands of all that are concern'd, to change it quickly, as they esteem my Favour, or regard my Authority. I must leave it to the Minister's Discretion, whether this Sermon shall be in the *English*, or the *British* Tongue; but a Sermon there must be in one of them, on every Lords-Day, in every Parish-Church throughout the Diocese, unless there be great Cause to the contrary, *Can. 45*. I will not so far distrust the Reasonableness of this Injunction, as to add any Arguments in favour of it, because I can foresee nothing material to be objected to it. But let me take this Opportunity of advising the Ministers so to divide their *English* and their *British* Sermons, as may most tend to the general Edification of their People. In some places I understand there is now and then an *English* Sermon preached for the sake of one or two of the best Families in the Parish, although the rest of the Parish understand little or nothing of *English*, and those few Families understand the *British* perfectly well, as being their native Tongue: I cannot possibly approve of this Respect and Complaisance to a few, that makes the Minister so useless to the rest, and much the greatest number of his People. I should be very glad (for my own sake)

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fake) that there were but one Language common to us all, and that one were *Englisb*: but till that Wish can be accomplished, I heartily desire the Language of the Minister may be always such, as will best instruct and edify his People most; and that no *Civility* should come in competition with his *Duty*, much less take place of it. I know that the Religion and Good-breeding of the Gentry will easily part with a respectful Custom when it is prejudicial to their poor Neighbours. What is it for a Minister to be a *Barbarian*, and to speak in an *unknown Tongue*, but to preach in a Language that is not understood by those who hear him? And if I were to give you Rules of Preaching, whatever the Language were, *Englisb* or *British*, the first should be, to speak to the *Greatest-part* of your Congregation, *i. e.* to those who make up the *Body* of your People. Consider their Necessities and Manners, and suit the *Matter* of your Sermons to them; consider their Capacities and Understandings, and suit your *Language* and *Expression* to them, and I dare warrant you will best discharge the Office of a Preacher. I do not mean, that you should use the *Market-Phrase*, and fall into the Expression of the lowest of the Vulgar; but such a plainness of Speech as is suited to the Capacity of all Men in general, which yet is clean, and pure, and such as the most elegant and well-bred People may and do use: all manner of Words and Expressions, that have any thing base and vile in them, that excite any sordid or impure Images in the Mind, or that are, by use, become ambiguous, and of *double-meaning*, are to be carefully avoided in our Compositions for the Pulpit: That place is Sacred to severity, and will admit no sort of Levities in Language. Let but your Words be plain and proper, and they will be received, and understood, and approv'd by all the Congregation,

gregation, tho' made up of great variety of People. A Preacher cannot answer it to his *Audience*, if what he says be proper only to *a few*, or intelligible to here and there a Man. Would that be thought a Civil Entertainment, where more than half the Guests must rise from the Table, and go away with nothing? The Case is not unlike, where many Controversial Points are handled, new Notions started, and new Books confuted, and Authors call'd upon, in places where the People (Nine of Ten) have never so much as heard of such an Error, such a Person, such a Book, or Name, or Thing: They profit nothing by such means: Discourses of this kind are wholly lost upon them: And so, indeed, are many others, made on odd and antiquated Subjects; Things that are true perhaps, but so much out of the common way, that they signify but little, and edify less, tho' handled very learnedly, and very well understood. In a word, I ask no more, under this Head, than that every Preacher would, whilst he is designing and composing his Sermon, consider the Nature and Condition of his *Audience*, their spiritual Wants, and the Reach of their Understanding; and treat them in such a manner, as shall most probably affect *the greatest part* of them. He should (and would if he could) instruct and affect them *all*; but the diversity of Age and Capacity making that impossible, his next best Aim must be, to instruct and affect the *most*, which is certainly best done by plain Sense in plain Expression.

6. Is he, and his Curate, of an unblemish'd Life?

6. I have been making some Observations upon Reading Prayers, and Preaching in such manner as may tend most

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most to the Edification of the People; but neither will be done as it ought to be, unless the Answer to this Enquiry be in the *Affirmative*. If a *sober and unblemish'd Life* do not adorn the Minister, he will not be able either to Pray or Preach to any great purpose: The People will not fail, in the midst of his best Performances, to remember his Disorders and Irregularities: they will be evermore applying to him what the *Psalmist* says ---in the Name of God --- *Why dost thou preach my Laws, and takest my Covenant in thy mouth? whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee?* 'Tis a dreadful Objection People make to all that we can say, in behalf of Virtue and Religion, if we live loosely and disorderly---Why does this Man confute his Doctrine by his Practice? Why does he heap up Arguments to stir us to Sobriety and Temperance, that have no Power upon himself? I own these Reasonings are not good; nor does it follow, that the Minister believes not what he says is true, because he lives in Contradiction to it. The Rule is the same to both the Minister and People, and each shall answer for themselves for the breach of it: but the Minister is obliged to shew the People that the Rule is practicable. He is to go before them, by Example, in the ways of Righteousness, and shew the People, those ways are passable, and safe, and easier than they apprehend them to be. He is not only to preach up Temperance, and Sobriety, and Chastity, and Justice, and Mercy, and every thing that is praise-worthy---but also to let them see, that the Arguments and Motives by which he persuades his People to the Exercise of all these Graces and Virtues, are such, as thoroughly convince and persuade himself; so that they see his Practice correspond to his Instructions.

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I know not (as I said) of one Precept in all the Scriptures, commanding any thing good, or prohibiting any thing evil, that does not as much oblige *every Man and Woman* living, as it does the *Priest* or *Minister* of the *Parish*; but yet I see *his* Condemnation for Offences of the same kind, must needs be greater than *theirs*. Whence can this be, but from the Nature of his Office and holy Calling, which is to teach all Truth, and to live in the Exercise of it? From the Solemnity of his own Engagements, when he was separated from the World to God's Service, by which he willingly bound himself, to go before his People, both in *Doctrine* and *Example*? From the Expectation of all the World, which is, has been, and will for ever be, that the Priest should live a Life according to his Rules, and in most exemplary manner? And from the mighty Scandal that he gives, when he walks contrary to these Engagements, Obligations, and Expectations; no bodies Crimes exciting more Abhorrence, Rage, and Detestation, in the Hearts of all Men, than theirs who are devoted to the Service of the Altar: nor do any one's Offences equally wound Religion with theirs: not when Men reason well, and judge impartially; but when Men of corrupt Minds and wicked Practice reason and judge, as they have always done, and will, I doubt not, always do. They conclude against the Truths of Revelation, from the little Effect they see they have upon the practice of the *Priests*, its domestick Servants, Votaries, and Defenders. Vain Men, it is not so! You want more solid Arguments against the Truths that trouble you, than any you can find: You want Objections to the Precepts of the Gospel, that enjoin you Holiness of Life, and Virtues of all kinds; and you expect to find them sooner, and more plentifully, from the Practice of weak im-

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perfect Men, and subject to the same Passions, Inclinations, and Affections with your selves, than any your Wit and Invention can furnish you with, or any you can fetch from the defect of Reason in those Rules and Precepts, or of Authority in those who gave them and enjoyn'd them. But how can you be strengthened in Infidelity, or settled in wicked Practice, from the corrupt and depraved Manners of the Priests, when the Question is about the Truth and Reasonableness of the Rules and Precepts you are to walk by, and their *Authority*, and not about the Effect and Influence they have? when even those Priests, as well as you, are obliged to walk by Rule, and will be judg'd by Rule, and certainly condemn'd for their Transgressing it? Let us desire these Gentlemen, not to defer so much to our Example, unless they will conclude as well in favour of Truth and Virtue, from the Practice of such among us as walk honestly and carefully, as they do against them, from the Practice of those who walk contrary to both.

But with how much Reason and Strength soever I think I could argue against those Men who slight and discredit Virtue and Religion for the Wickedness sake of some bad Ministers — yet does my Heart fail me, when I consider how it is *in fact*, and to what degree those good things suffer in the World, from any of our notorious Failings; then have I little Joy in thinking that Men make false Conclusions in these cases, when I remember they *have* made, and *will*, to the End of the World, make just the *same* Conclusions. Then have I little Regard to all that can be offered to these Gainstayers of the Truth; and rather turn my self to you, my *Brethren*, and my *Friends*, with the most serious Exhortation of St. Paul to Titus 2, 7, 8. *that you would in all things show your selves Patterns of good works, that be that is*
of

of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you; and giving no offence in any thing, that the Ministry may not be blamed, 2 Cor. 6. 3. You see how early Men began to take Exceptions to the Sacred Office, for the sake of some who behaved themselves ill in that Character.

7. Doth he diligently upon Sundays, openly in the Church, Instruct and Examine so many Children of his Parish, sent unto him, as he thinks convenient, in some part of the Church-Catechism?

7. The Excellence and Usefulness of *Catechising* young People, and instructing them in the Principles of their Religion, is so manifestly great, that I know not what to say in its Defence: things that are plain, do neither want, nor bear any Illustration. Religion is, in this, like all other Arts and Sciences; it must be learn'd whilst People are young, and susceptible of good Impressions, or very little Proficiency will be made therein: and I see most Clergy-men are of this Opinion, by the innumerable multitude of Catechisms that have been, and are dayly put out by them, for the Use of young Beginners in the Knowledge of Religion; not that they differ in their Principles, or Exposition of great Truths each from the other, but that each of them has Regard to some particular Sett of People, to which they have, or have had, Relation, to whose Necessities, and Capacities, they suit their Instructions: This is the true

Cause of their Variety; for they all of them comment on the same Text, namely, the *Church Catechism*, which is, in truth, such a *Summary* of the Christian Faith and Duty, delivered with such Brevity, and yet such Perspicuity, that, as far as I can judge, no Church of any Age or Place hath ever produced its Equal; and you shall in vain seek for the like, in the Works of any one, either *Greek* or *Latin*, Writer. And as this Variety of Catechisms demonstrates the Concurrence of the Common Judgment in the Use and Necessity of Catechising, so it has made it very easy for others to do the same good Work after them; and therefore I hope you will every one of you attend to it, and breed up a Generation that will shame the present one, both in its Knowledge and sincere Practice of Christian Duties. And that which should the rather invite you to discharge this part of your Duty to your Parishes, is this, That the Elder People, who have either never learn'd, or quite forgotten the Principles of their Religion, will be hereby instructed, or reminded of them: I never yet heard Catechising in a Church, where I did not see the Oldest and the Gravest People attend as seriously as any else; and I dare say they were as much edified, and more pleas'd to be so, than the Younger. I was once in a Church (which I have ever since remembred with some pleasure) where I heard Men and Women, some 50, some 60, and others upwards of those Years, repeating their Catechism before the Congregation, as Children commonly do, in other places. A good Christian had, it seems, left so many *Loaves*, to be disposed of to such poor People (of what Age soever) as should publickly submit to be instructed in the Church Catechism, and publickly rehearse the several parts of it; which they did, very readily, without any Shame or Shiness. Who
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knows but these poor People would, without this Motive and Encouragement, have lived and died in utter ignorance of the Faith and Duty of a Christian? And was ever any Bread distributed with more Charity, that fed the Soul (as it were) as well as Body? But tho' Old People will not (without the *Loaves*) be brought to rehearse their Catechism among you, yet I dare say the Oldest will not be ashamed to learn it, and remember it, from what they hear the Young-ones say, and what is said to them.

8. Doth he administer the Sacrament of Baptism publickly at the Font in the Church, and not elsewhere, except in case of necessity, when there is cause to fear the Child may otherwise die without it?

9. Doth he, in that case, use only the Office for Private Baptism; and afterwards, if the Child recover, receive it Publickly into the Church, as the Law requires?

8. 9. These two Articles are Points of *Discipline*; and in all such Cases, the *Rubrick* is the Guide. The *Font* was usually placed at the Entry of the Church, to signify that no body could be a Member of Christ's Church but he who was initiated into it by *Water-Baptism*,

Baptism, and the bringing Children to publick Baptism in Churches, was, among other Reasons, required, to the intent, that every one of the Congregation, hearing the Stipulations and Engagements made for the present Infant, might be put in mind of their own, and accordingly endeavour to reform their own Defects, and faulty Negligences. The Injunctions of the Antient Christians of this kind, had more and other Reasons to proceed upon than the late or modern ones had, or can have. But *the Church of England* had, and hath Authority enough, and Reasons enow, to enjoin what she enjoins of this nature; and I must also add, that she hath Goodness enough to connive at the Relaxation of such Rules of Discipline as cannot strictly be observ'd without great Danger, or extream Inconvenience, upon some Occasions, and in some Places; not to *schismatical*, or *careless*, or *presumptuous* Heads, regardless of all Rule and Order, but to such modest, prudent, and considerate Men, as finding themselves in great Straits, do rather venture an Irregularity of their own, than an apparent Mischief, to the Church.

10. Doth he Administer the Sacrament of the *Lord's-Supper* so often, that all his Parishioners may Receive at least three times in the Year?

11. Is he always ready to Administer it when there is a sufficient Number of his Parishioners duly prepared and desirous to Communicate with him?

12. Doth

12. Doth he on the Sunday or Holy-day before the Communion, give Notice thereof in the Church, and Read One of the Exhortations fitted to that Purpose in the Common-Prayer-Book?

10, 11, 12. Both Laws and Custom have so secur'd this Point, that I do not expect to hear of one Parish, in the Diocese, where the People have not the Opportunity of communicating, three times at least in every Year; but oftner, if they signify any Disposition to do so, and have sufficient Numbers to joyn with them. I doubt not but the Ministers will be so far from neglecting the Opportunities required by Authority, that they will seriously and earnestly invite their People to communicate more frequently than they are commanded to do: And will dispose them to it by such Discourses as will shew them, that the Duty they are called to, is none of those they think the *Burthens of Religion*, but rather a great Privilege, an Honour, and Advantage; a Feast of Love, and Joy, and Thanksgiving for the Deliverance of our Souls from Death, for the forgiveness of our Sins, and for the Satisfaction made to God by the most meritorious Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, which we then and there commemorate. They will endeavour to abate the Horror, and most dreadful Apprehensions which some of *St. Paul's* Expressions (used also by our Church in its *Exhortations*) ill applied and understood, are apt to excite in many Peoples Minds: By shewing them what *St. Paul* meant by them, in the particular Case of the

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the *Corinthians*; and what the Church now means in the general application of them to all her Children; which surely cannot be the same, where there is not the like Occasion given, the same Abuses not to be committed, nor any Circumstances appear common with theirs, which first occasioned that Discourse, and which can best instruct us in its sense and meaning. They will insist upon a *penitent Heart, a lively Faith, and a forgiving Temper*; and that will scatter all their Fears, and fill them with good hope when they approach to the Lord's Table, and bring them home again with Peace and Satisfaction. See if the whole Communion Service tends not to this purpose; if it supposes any other preparation to the coming to the Sacrament, to the eating and drinking *Worthily*, and to the avoiding that Damnation that it threatens to the *Unworthy Receiver*, whatever it means by these Expressions.

13. Is he careful to Visit the Sick, and to prepare them for the Holy Communion, and for their departure into the other World.

13. This is so tender a part of the Office of a *Parish Priest*, that even good Nature and Compassion, are as ready to excite him to the due discharge of it, as the sense of Duty, and the Injunctions of Authority can be: But when they joyn, no Considerations can be wanting to enforce the carefullest Attention to this good part of *Visiting the Sick*. Surely, Men are never more in earnest, never more truly sensible of their everlasting Concern, than when they lie upon the Bed of Sicknes, and believe they are going to give an account to God of all their
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their past Life. Then therefore is the time when they will gladliest hear your Prayers, attentively consider your Advice, bear your Reproofs, and hearken to your Admonitions, Exhortations and Instructions; then are they readiest to confess their Sins, promise Amendment, and Submission to the Laws of Christ. Then therefore is the Season of applying to them, with most success, in such Discourses as you find most proper to their State and Condition; whether it be to bring them to a Sense and Acknowledgment of their past Offences, to work in them such Shame and Sorrow as befits them; such Purposes of Satisfaction and Amends, (where it can possibly be done) as will testify they have brought forth Fruits *meet for Repentance*, and such firm Resolutions of Amendment for the future, that they and you may have great Comfort in them, whether they live or die: Or whether it be to strengthen them in their Faith, clear up their Doubts, and encourage them against all causeless fear, distrust of their Condition, and Despondency.

I would not have the Clergy to be Busy-Bodies, nor Medlers with other Peoples Matters, especially their Temporal and Domestick Concerns, because it gives Men great distast, and does disservice to them in the main: But yet, unless they be most diligent and heedful Observers of the Lives and Manners of their People, they will neither preach pertinently to them in their Churches, nor discourse properly in their Houses, nor rightly apply to them, on their Sick Beds. To do these Patients the best Service, one must thoroughly know, and be well acquainted, with their Condition. If Shame, or Pride, or Vanity, or other Reason should cause them to conceal their State, and talk in generals only (as the Case too often happens) yet your Acquaintance with
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their practice will help you to speak plainly to them, and your Duty will oblige you to be particular, in all points that are necessary. Whereas if the Sick be silent, or conceal himself, and the Minister be ignorant how things have pass'd, the Visit will be meer formality and useless to them both. I would not therefore have the practice of sending for a strange, or neighbour Minister, on these Occasions, encouraged beyond what is necessary. The *Parish-Priest* is much the fittest Person to be used in this Service, because he is presum'd to know the Parties best, and consequently can best fit his Exhortations to the present Necessities. In cases indeed, where the Sick have something secret to impart, and would unburthen their Conscience, and receive either Satisfaction of some Doubts, or Absolution. I cannot but believe they are at liberty to send for whom they please, and the Clergy at liberty to go, and serve them to their utmost. But in all other Cases, which are ordinary, where neither Secrecy, nor greater Skill, are required, I should be glad the People would always send for their own Ministers, and that the Clergy should make some scruple of invading their Brother's Office, on these Occasions, when they know he is in the way, and within Reach, and ready to do his Duty. They will, I hope, be ever tender of each other's Credit, and will contribute nothing (which they can avoid) to the bringing any disrespect on any one; nor should the People be encourag'd in the Opinion, that *One Man's* Service is so preferable to *Another's*, in Matters of this Nature, where all depends upon the Grace of God, and the good Disposition of the Recipients, or the Parties administred to; and nothing at all upon the goodness of the Minister, tho' he were holy as *John the Baptist*. But can I slip this Opportunity of saying, that, tho' I know
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this is an Error of the People, and with the Prejudice were wholly rooted up out of their Minds, yet I believe it never was, nor ever will be otherwise? The Clergy who live best, will not only evermore be best esteemed of by all Men (that is their due, and always will be paid) but Men will always think their Ministerial Service to be much more efficacious, than that of Others, and will be always more desirous of it; and in the times of Sickness more than any Other. I know not how to rectify this Error, but I know how it may be turn'd to good, and made subservient to the best of Purposes, and that will be by living holily; for then the People will desire our Prayers, and covet earnestly our Spiritual Service, and believe us more effectually when we apply to them; and tho' *they* should be mistaken, yet *we* shall be the better, and reap the Fruits and Rewards of being so. But where will those unhappy Ministers appear, who, by their wicked and licentious Lives, have given such Scandal and Offence to their Congregations, that they abhor the Sacrifice of the Lord; and know not how to send for them, or ask their Prayers; *who have themselves lived, as it were, without God in the World?* What a discouragement must it needs be, to poor People from calling for the Minister to dispose them for Death, when they have known him live, as if there were no after-reckoning to be made? But with what Face, what Heart, can he prepare them for the Sacrament, by exhorting them to a lively Faith, and most sincere Repentance, who seems, to them, to have no sense of either? The People are, in truth, too slack in calling for the Assistance of their Pastors, upon these Occasions, even when they are Sober, Virtuous, Godly Men, and every way qualified to do them Service: But who can bear the Burthen of that Guilt,

that makes it seem so reasonable for People not to send for, or admit that Service? Some few there are, I doubt, of this bad Class; God, of his Goodness, shorten, every Day, their Number, by giving them the Grace of true Repentance, that they may save themselves and those that hear them. But where the People are slack and negligent, there I advize the Minister to find his Opportunity, and visit without being sent for, for fear he should not be sent for at *all*, or sent for, as the manner often is, when 'tis too late. The Friends and Relations of the Sick are indeed obliged to give the Minister notice, when it is most convenient he should come; when are the intervals of greater ease, from Pain or Sickness; when they are most awake and sensible; and when the Operations of Medicines best permit; want of this Information may make a Visit troublesome, if not entirely useless; besides the loss of Time and Pains, which in some cases, is not inconsiderable. I do not therefore judge a Minister to be always in fault, when some of his Parishioners have died without his visiting them; it may be he has had no notice of their Illness, or was not called by those who should have done that good Office for their Friend or Relation. He must be always ready and disposed to go; and he must do it *freely*, without *asking* and without *expecting* any manner of Reward; for fear that Consideration should hinder poor People from requiring his Prayers and Assistance in their last Extremities, which they want, and would be glad to have, but cannot bear the Charge of. This is an Age of such Corruption, that tho' I hope, nothing like it has reached so far as *Wales*, yet I cannot choose but give warning of it, to all with whom I have any thing to do. As to the Business of *Abolution*, in this Office, as it is a matter of great moment, so is it al-
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so thought of some Difficulty to know when it is to be applied. The Conditions of it, are the truly Repenting, and unfeignedly believing the Gospel. The Difficulty of applying it arises from the Difficulty of knowing when Men truly Repent, and when they unfeignedly believe. And I must needs say, that it is not in any Man's power to know, with any certainty, when this is truly done: We must take Mens Word for it, and depend upon the Professions they make; and tho' we may pass a wrong Judgment, and pronounce a Sentence that will not stand, before the great Judge; yet we shall do it without hazard to our selves, provided the Sick Penitent make, at that time, a special Confession of his Sins, and humbly and heartily desire the Priest or Minister to give him *Absolution*. These are the Directions the Church gives in the *Rubrics* of this Office, which if carefully read and well observed, I know not what great Difficulty the Priest will find about pronouncing the *Absolution*. I will end this Article with remarking, That the Performance of this Office, with such a serious, grave, and compassionate Concern, as the Sick Person's Case requires, does usually draw with it a greater degree of Esteem and Love, from those who behold and hear it, than the Performance of other Offices is wont to do: And I have known it engage Men in a very Serviceable Friendship to their Minister, for ever after. Under this Head, I think it proper to say, That the Minister remind such People as have in their Sicknes desired the Prayers of the Congregation, to return their Thanks as publicly to God, for his restoring them to their Health.

14. Doth he ever Celebrate Matrimony without Banns being first Publish'd Three several Sundays, or Holy-days in the Parish Church where the Parties dwell, unless he have a special Licence to do it?

14. To prevent Incestuous, Shameful, and Unequal Matches, the Church has all along been careful to ordain that none should be clandestinely Married, without *Banns* being first *published*, or without Special *Licence* obtain'd, and within the Hours of 8 and 12 in the Morning. To this purpose it has been made highly penal by the *Canons*, for any Clergyman to Marry otherwise than was allowed and publickly approved. The 62d *Canon* made in 1603, ordains Suspension *ipso facto* for three Years, to any one offending in this kind. We must indeed own, that all the Evils and Mischiefs of Clandestine Marriages, how great and many soever they be, are justly chargeable upon the Clergy, since, without their concurrence, there could be no such things; and therefore no Severities can be too great, to be inflicted on those wicked Men, who for the sake of a little Profit more than ordinary, bring so much Shame, and Sorrow and Substantial Misery, upon whole Families; undo young thoughtless Creatures; dissolve the Ties of Childrens Duty and Obedience to their Parents; and of Parents Care and Affection to their Children; nothing being more apt to alienate their Hearts, and provoke them to many rash and hard Resolutions, than the strange and unaccountable Choices their Children often

often make ; which yet they could not compass, without the Assistance of some Mercenary Wretch abusing his good Office. Ought not a Clergyman, above all others, to consider, the strength of Parents Love to their Children ; their constant care and thoughtfulness to do them good ; their Charges in their Education ; the Toils they are at, the Pains and Labours they undergo continually, to make Provision for them ; the Designs they have laid to make them happy ; the hopes they have treasured up in them, and the pleasure they have already conceived in having them well bestowed ? These things are all so natural, that they come within the compass of every Bodies thought ; and how can any Clergyman forbear to put himself in such a Parents Case, and see how he could endure the Disappointment of all such Love, such Hope, such Expectations, and Desire ; and, in their stead, to find himself covered with Confusion and Disgrace, by the most disagreeable, unequal, if not shameful Match of his extravagant and disobedient Child ? And all this, by the means of a Man who must transgress all the Rules of Reason, and Commands of God and his Superiors to bring it to pass. I know not how a Man can make himself more justly hated, than a Clergyman does, by these clandestine and forbidden Marriages ; nor draw more Execrations, if not Vengeance, on his Head, from Families so provoked and injured. I doubt the Laws themselves tho' executed carefully by all the Clergy, would not be able to prevent all manner of Miscarriages of this Nature. The business of *Licenses* is subject to much abuse, but this is what the Clergy cannot help, and therefore are not to answer for ; what they can help, I hope they will ; and to this purpose, I can think of nothing better than that they should consider what the *Penalty* is now by the

the Laws of the Land, upon Offenders in this kind, and acquaint the Churchwardens, and their Parishioners with it. In the 7 and 8 of William III. pag. 734. it is enacted—*That every Parson, Vicar, or Curate, who shall himself marry, or who shall substitute, or employ, or knowingly and wittingly shall suffer and permit any Other Minister to marry any Persons in any Church or Chappel, to such Parson, Vicar, or Curate belonging, or appertaining, without Publication of Banns, or Licenses of Marriage first had and obtained, shall, for every such Offence forfeit the Sum of One hundred Pounds. Of this, the Informer who shall sue for the same, is to have Fifty; the Queen the other half. This is the Penalty of the Clergyman besides Suspension for three Years. Moreover it is enacted—That every Man that is so Married without License or Publication of Banns aforesaid shall forfeit the Sum of Ten Pounds to be recovered, with Costs of Suit, by any Person who shall inform or sue for the same.* So that here is an Encouragement for the Churchwardens, or Others, to look after such People as are thus clandestinely Married. Nay, the Parish Clerk, or Sexton, or other Person, acting as the Sexton or Parish Clerk, who shall aid, promote or assist such Marriage without License, shall forfeit the Sum of Five Pounds, to be recovered as above is said. You see what Care the Laws both of Church and State have taken to prevent Clandestine Marriages. Let them be put in execution, and see what will come of it. Let us make a most severe Example of the first Clergyman, the first Married Man, and the first Clerk or Sexton we can take offending in this kind, and try what effect it will have upon Others. Let none of Our Eyes spare them; it may be they are all so poor, that nothing can be got from any of them; no matter; let us pursue

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sue them into Prisons, and there let them lie unpitied, unrelieved, till they have suffered as much Want and Misery, as they have brought upon the Heads of other People that were innocent. I should not be ashamed to be my self an *Informer* to the Magistrate against such People. Make but a poor Man lie in Prison, till he has paid *Ten Pounds*, and I believe his Neighbours will take heed of being married without *Banns*, or *License* for the future. I do for my own part, promise to pursue with all the warrantable Zeal I can, whoever shall be found offending in this point, within my Jurisdiction. And if the *Churchwardens* shall present these People (as by their Duty they are bound) we shall, amongst us, be able, I hope, to bring them before the *Secular Judge*, who will deal with them according to Law.

Thus I have gone through all the several Articles contained under the *First Title*, which relate to the *Clergy* in particular, and tho' the *Enquiry* is made to, and the Answer expected from the *Churchwardens*; yet I conceived it best, to direct the Consideration of all these things to you, *My Brethren*, who are indeed the most concerned in them, and whose Practice is to furnish the *Churchwardens* with proper Answers to the several Questions. I hope you will, all of you, seriously read, and think upon them; and if any thing is, or hath been amiss, that you will set it right again, that I may come and meet you (as both my Wish and Inclination is) in Love and with the Spirit of Meekness.

TITLE II.

Concerning the Parishioners.

IT will not be amiss, I believe, that the Church-wardens should remember, and be told. 1. That they are Officers of the Parish, in Ecclesiastical Affairs. 2. That when they enter on their Office, they take an Oath to discharge that Office, *well and truly*. 3. That by Virtue of this Oath, they are obliged, at *Visitations*, to make *Presentments* of such things as are amiss in their Parishes, according to the *Articles* delivered to them. 4. That if they knowingly neglect, or refuse to make such *Presentments*, the *Ordinary* has Power to proceed against them, as *unlawful Breakers of their Oath*. These things it is fit they should understand; and, I doubt, the Education, way of Living, and Capacity of most of them, will make it needful for the Minister to instruct them in their Duty, and remind them of their Obligations, and help them to make their *Presentments*, in such manner as shall best answer to the end and purpose of their appearing at *Visitations*, which is, in truth, to be aiding and assisting to the *Ordinary*, in the exercise of what Church-Discipline is left within his power. And I hope the short Remarks I shall make upon each Head, as I go along, will convince Men of the Reasonableness of making *Presentments* of Offenders in these particulars.

I. Are there any in your Parish who commonly Absent themselves from Morning or Evening Prayer, upon the Lord's Day?

I. As it was God alone who sanctified this Day, and separated it to a holy Rest, in Commemoration of his Benefits and Mercies. So it is He alone who can excuse a Man, absenting himself entirely on this Day, from performing his Devotion in publick with the Congregation, i. e. A Man must needs be disabled from coming to Church, by Age, or Pain, or Sickness, or Indisposition, or extremely bad Ways and Weather (all which are Excuses of God's own making) who ordinarily and commonly absents himself, Morning and Evening from the Church, or Congregation, where he pretends to worship God. I have ever thought it a great disservice to Religion, to carry the *Common Duties* of it, beyond the *Common Powers* of those who are to practise them; or stretch Commands to an unreasonable extent. And upon this Score, have wondered much, and not without much dissatisfaction, to see so many worthy People in the Days of our Fathers, press the Observation of the Sabbath (as they call'd it, by which the *Christian Church* for 1500 Years did even mean *Saturday*) in so rigorous and precise a manner, as would have been a Burthen even to *Jews*. But I would not, for all that, have their Mistakes so rectified, as to run us into the contrary extreame, of a loose and negligent Observance of that Day. That Day still is, and ever must be, holy to the Lord: and when it ceases to be so, there will be

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an end of our Religion. Observe the People that neglect the serving God upon that Day, and I believe, you will find them good for nothing; they serve him very carelessly at all times else; nay, we may well suspect they serve him not at all; for wherever *Christianity* has got any footing, it has been allowed, that the *Lord's Day* should be the Day of Publick Worship for all sorts of People, and they who have neglected it, have generally been reckoned Men of no Religion: Or if they are not so by Principles, they will soon become so, by this practice of absenting ordinarily from Church on the *Lord's Day*. 'Tis the frequent Return of this Day, and what is said and done thereon, that keeps Religion alive in Peoples Hearts. They would forget the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Creed*, and the *Ten Commandments*, if they came not to Church, to hear and repeat them there on *Sundays*. It is on these Occasions, that even good and serious Christians are glad to be put in mind of many useful Truths, and important Duties, which they had, in a manner, forgotten or neglected: All People do not come to Church to learn what they never heard or knew before, but to be exhorted to put in practice what they knew, and to be reminded of what they understood, but had not well enough attended to. And I question not, but most of us owe what share of Virtue, and Religion we have, to the Improvements we make, by the Grace of God, of these Weekly Opportunities of meeting together and serving him in Publick. Let the *Churchwardens* therefore look about, and see who they are, that *commonly* (not seldom, or now and then, for most People have occasions so to do, and must not be call'd upon for that) absent themselves from Morning and Evening Service on the *Lord's Day*: and *present* them at the *Visitation*, that care may be taken, to admonish

monish and instruct them better, or, if there be good Reason, to punish them and make them *Examples*. As to *Dissenters* who are known to resort to their own *Assemblies*, and to have qualified themselves as the *Toleration-Act* requires (*i. e.* who have taken the Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy* and subscribed the *Declaration* mentioned in a *Statute* made 30 *Car. II.*) such *Dissenters*, I say, are not to be *presented*. But if you know of any such, as under pretence of being *Dissenters*, abstain from going either to *Church*, or to *separate Assemblies*, you may well *present* them, and put it upon them to prove that they have qualified themselves, as is required. And this, without Offence even to *Dissenters*, if they are good and serious People: For the Law was not made to encourage *Irreligion*, but *for the Ease of Tender Consciences*; not to tolerate Men that would not worship God, *at all*, but such as could not be brought (*Unhappy People they!*) to worship Him, in the way of the *Church of England*. I cannot choose but thank God, that I have not many *Dissenters*, within my *Dio-cese*; And yet I should be glad to hear their Numbers were increased, by the Addition of all such, as constantly pass away the *Lord's Day*, either in doing nothing, or in doing their private and domestick Affairs, or in walking about their *Grounds*, or in what they call *good fellowship*; that is, I had rather they were of *some*, than of *no* Religion; and would worship God in any Congregation, *by Law permitted* if they will not do it, in our good way, *by Law establish'd*.

2. Are there any who follow their Callings, or other worldly Employment, upon the Lords-Day?

2. If the Covetousness of Gain, and the Hardheartedness of many Men, were not strangely great, such an *Enquiry* as this, could not, in a Christian Country, be, in any degree, necessary. The Mercy of the *Fourth Commandment* was to extend, we know, to all the Family, even to the Servants, and the Cattel without doors, for fear they should be over-wrought. And because the Servants were, heretofore, much in their Masters Power, it was ordain'd (in the days of our *Saxon Ancestors*) that if a Master commanded his Slave to work on *Sunday*, the Slave was to be set at *Liberty*, and the Master punish'd by *Fine*: and if he wrought upon that Day, without Command, he was to be publicly scourged. And, that there might be no pretence of Necessity for doing any other worldly Business on this Day but what was charitable, or needful for the Life and Ease of Man, not even for killing and providing Victuals for the Family, it was ordain'd, that *Saturday* should generally be the *Market-Day* for all Christians; and it has, accordingly, been so, in most Countries, for upwards of 900 Years, as appears from our Books: tho' other Days are also *Market-Days* in many Places, for some particular Reasons. Now if the Laws, both of God, and of the Land, prohibit Men the following their Callings, and other worldly Employments on the *Lords-Day*, not only for the Servants and the Cattels sake, that they might rest from their Labours; but also to distinguish

guish it from other Days, and to give all People Opportunities and Leisure of serving God, and looking after the Concerns of Religion, and securing their eternal Interest, by offering up their Prayers and Praises, by hearing, and attending to, God's Word, and taking their Lives into Examination: if these, and the like, are proper Exercises for the *Lords-Day* --- it is to be hoped, that the People will be brought to think, that not their worldly Labours, and the following their proper Callings only, will be Hindrances and Impediments to these good *Sunday-Works*; but all such rude and boisterous Playings, Games, and Exercises, as quite transport the Mind, from serious sober Considerations; consume abundance of their Time; tempt them to Swear and Curse; and either end in Quarrels, or in drunken Associations, and loose Appointments. These, and the like ungodly Works of Riot and Excess, are of much worse consequence, and more profane the *Lords-Day*, by a great deal, than the following lawful Callings and Employments would; and, certainly, the Ways that naturally lead to them, should be most carefully avoided. *The Book of Sports* itself, (which was but a *Declaration* put out by *James I.* and afterwards unhappily reviv'd in the Days of *K. Charles*, his Son) as odious, and licentious as it was esteem'd, did yet prescribe such Rules, as I should be glad were now observ'd, in some places, in Honour of the *Lords-Day*. No Liberties were allowed (by that *Proclamation*, or *Declaration*) but with these Conditions and Restrictions:

1. That the Men and Women should have been at *Divine Service*.
2. At their own *Parish Churches*.
3. To have no Liberty till after *Evening Service* was ended.
4. The People that belong'd to *One Parish* were not to join in Recreation with the People of *Another Parish*, but each to keep to their own Company.

I confess, I cannot see, but, if innocent, modest, and moderate Recreations, are to be allowed upon the *Lord's Day*, that any better Limitations, and Conditions can be set to Peoples Liberties, than *these*. And therefore till the People can be brought to consider things better, and betake themselves to wiser Counsels, let care be taken, that these idle Hours be pass'd with as little offence as can be, to Virtue and Religion: and that if any thing be done, at such Times, as the *Laws* and *Canons* will take hold of; let the Offenders be certainly taken notice of, and pursued to Extremity. The *Laws* forbid all *Swearing*, *Cursing*, *Drunkennes*, and *Reveling*; it will be hard for those who meet (to take their *Pastimes*) on these Occasions, to avoid the falling into some of these Offences. Let not a Man of them be spared; make the severest Examples of them, that the *Laws* will allow; make it a *shameful*, or a *painful*, or a *chargeable* thing, to swear an *Oath*, to utter a *Curse*, or to be *Drunk*, or to use any *wanton Dalliance*, on these Occasions, and you will quickly see an End of these *Assemblings*: it will be so *uneasy* a thing, to be upon the *guard*, so long, in a suspected Company, that they will either refuse to meet *at all*, or will soon break the *Meeting* up; and, either way, be inoffensive; I think the *Laws* that punish these Offences, may, by this means, be made as useful, as if they did directly threaten and forbid such *Meetings*, which are the Occasions of them, and Incitements to them. And those will be to be blamed, who shall not contribute to put them in Execution, when there is good Reason.

There is another innocent and artful way of *cutting short* at least, if not *preventing*, these *unseasonable Recreations*. And that is, of not going so soon to *Evening Prayer*, as ordinarily is done, and lengthening out the *Time*,

Time; when there, by *Catechizing* the young People. A prudent Man, may, by these means, steal an Hour from these disorderly Folks, and give it them again, in something better for them. But how much happier would it be, both for the *Minister*, and for themselves, if these young People, would be brought to consider seriously, that these their idle Hours (as they account them) are, generally speaking, the only Hours they have, of all their Life, to spend in good Reflexions and Religious Meditations; to bethink themselves of what is past, and to resolve upon Amendment for the future. The Excuse they make, is, that they have no other time for Recreations, but the *Sunday Evenings*. I doubt it is not true; I have not heard, the People of our Countries, are so famed for diligence, and painful Labours, all the Week long. But, if we take them at their Word, let us also ask them what time they have, besides the *Sunday Evenings*, for attending to their Spiritual Concerns? When else they recollect their past Miscarriages? When they consider to what purpose they were sent into this World? In what manner they have led their Life in it? And whither they are hastning every Day? And what account they shall be able to give to God, when he shall summon them, by Death, to appear before him? They are, daily, call'd up *early* in the Morning by their Labours; and they return *late* from them, in the Evening; and very *weary* we may well presume. The rest of their Time is spent in Eating, Drinking, and Refreshing of themselves; after which, as soon as their Fathers, or their Masters will permit, they hasten them to Bed, and fall to Sleep immediately. Hear, O Father of unbounded Mercies, and incline thine Ear to all who pray for those that pray not for themselves; who let the Sun rise every Day, and set upon their Heads, without

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remembering their *Creator*, their *Redeemer*, and their *Judge*! And is not this the *daily* and the *weekly* course, of most Uneducated, Poor, and Labouring People? And how much ought they, then, to value *Sunday*, which gives them easy Opportunities of praying to God, and praising him, of hearing and attending to his Word, of confessing their Sins, imploring his forgiveness, and of asking every thing they stand in need of? How little a part of such a Day, can they afford to lose, who have taken so little care, the fix foregoing Ones? I am not, I must own, for pressing a precise and rigorous Observation of this Day, nor for filling Peoples Heads with false and *Jewish* Notions of its Sanctification. But I would have it carefully observed; the Time allotted for the *Church*, with Gravity, with Seriousness, and all Devotion; part of the rest, in sober Recollections, good Instructions of our Families, and reading some good Book; the other part, in such Discourse, Visit, or Friendly Entertainment, as is consistent with Sobriety, and Vertue, and Religion. Christianity is a most sweet, good-natur'd Institution, and will allow all easy, inoffensive Freedoms, even upon its highest *Festivals*, or its most Solemn *Fasts*. But let all Rude and Riotous Assemblings; all Clamorous Sports, and boistrous Exercises, and all undecent Liberties both of the Hand and Tongue, be banish'd from this *Day of Rest, and Holiness*. The *Article* forbids a Man, to work *his own Works*, on this Day, much more the Works that lead so easily to Sin, and most of all, the acknowledged *Works of Darknes*.

3. Are there any who refuse or neglect to send their Children and Servants to be Instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, by the Minister of your Parish, every Lord's-Day, at Evening Prayer?

3. It is the Duty of Parents, and of Masters, to send their Children, and Servants, to be instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion; nor can they do either *them*, or themselves, any greater Service, than in so doing. They make them thereby *wise to Salvation*; and put them in the way of being useful here, and happy hereafter. The Children that are best instructed, are like to be most dutiful and obedient to their Parents; and the Servants that are best taught, are like to be most just and honest to their Masters. Why should they not therefore, take all care, to have them well instructed in the Christian Duties? Children and Servants are very apt to give false Answers, to conceal Truths, and invent Lies, to save themselves from Blame and Punishment. They are very apt to take what is none of theirs, to gratify some present longing they have; very apt to mispend their Time, either in Idleness or Vicious Pleasures, to feed which, they often defraud their Superiors, either by selling their Goods underhand, or by keeping back part of the Price they have received, or by buying too dearly for them; and by many other ways making advantage of their Ignorance. Now there is no way so likely to keep Children and Servants, from fal-

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ling into these Offences, and to make them Just, and True, Honest, Faithful, and Conscientious, as the instructing them, and causing them to be instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, which forbids all these wicked Practices, and secures to all Parents, the Duty and Obedience of their Children; to all Masters, the just Gains of their Servants Time and Labour; and to all People, the Truth and Honesty and Justice of each other. And nothing but Religious Principles can make Men truly honest, at all Times, and in all Cases. And if People are not taught these Principles when young, they hardly ever learn them to good purpose. This is the Reason the Church insists so much upon the sending Children and Servants to be Catechised; 'tis for the Publick Good, as well as for their own; the whole *Parish* is the better for dutiful Children and honest Servants; and much the worse for Disobedient, False, Lying, and Theevish Ones. Such therefore as neglect, or refuse to send their Children and Servants to be Catechis'd, are very fit to be *presented*, in order to their Re-proof and Punishment.

4. Have you any in your Parish not yet Baptized?

5. Are there any who have been Baptiz'd, and likewise Instructed in the Church-Catechism, and yet have not been Confirmed by the Bishop?

6. Are

6. Are there any Confirm'd, and above Sixteen Years of Age, who do not Receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, at least three times in the Year, and particularly at *Easter*?

4, 5, 6. I suspect none can come under this 4th Article, but the Children of *Quakers*, and *Anabaptists* (if their Parents died whilst they were young) but if there be any others not Baptized, they ought to be discovered, that due care may be taken to have them instructed, and then *Christened*. After this, when they come to Years of Understanding, they are to be *Confirmed* by the Bishop, and if above Sixteen Years of Age, are obliged to communicate *three times in the Year at least*. The Children of Believers enter into Covenant with God, by Christ, in Baptism, before indeed they understand what any Covenant means, or what is required of those who are to be Baptized; and they are made, thereby, *Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*, without knowing there are any such Persons, Things, or Place. This is a Wonder of Mercy upon God's part; for the Church assures us that---*It is certain by God's Word, that Children, which are Baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved*; In lieu of this, the Children, promise on their parts, but promise by their Sureties, without knowing it, *to renounce the Devil and all his Works, to believe in God, and to serve him*, (*i. e.* they promise Faith, Repentance, and Obedience) which promise, when they come to Age, themselves

selves are bound to perform. This coming to Age, is coming to Years of Discretion and Understanding; as soon as they come to discern between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, and know what is commanded and what forbidden. A Child's *Knowledge* and his *Duty* grow together. His understanding is not to be measured by his Years, nor by his Memory, but by his sense of things, and apprehension: And some young ones, we see, will sooner by much than Others, find out their Obligations to God and Man, and set about discharging them. It is then the *apprehending* what Vows and Promises of Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, their Sureties have laid them under, that is indeed *the coming to Age*, which binds these young People to perform them: *i. e.* as soon as they understand their Christian Duties, they must needs engage to discharge them. Now the business of *Confirmation* on the Childrens part, is the renewing and confirming with their own Mouth, the Promise and Vow which was made by their Godfathers, in Baptism; and acknowledging themselves bound to believe and perform, what was then undertaken for them. I should therefore, be glad that none were brought to *Confirmation*, but such as may be well supposed to have some Sense and Understanding of what they undertake, and not be able barely to answer to the Questions of the *Catechism*. I hope that no Body will think himself not bound to perform his Baptismal Vows, because he has not solemnly undertaken to do so, by being *confirm'd*: Whether People are confirm'd or no, they are under the same Obligations to perform those Vows. *Confirmation* is by no means necessary or *essential* to Baptism; nor *completive* of it. 'Tis an excellent Institution of the Church, and serves to very good purposes, but it is no *Sacrament*; and therefore those who
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have not slighted, and neglected it, but wanted it, either through Ignorance, or lack of Opportunity, need not be much concern'd, altho' they have receiv'd the *Lord's Supper*, without being *Confirm'd*. It is sufficient (in the want of Opportunity) that Men be ready for it, and desirous of it, where and when it may be had. And for such as have received the *Lord's Supper* without it, they are presumed to have done already all that *Confirmation* supposes, they should do, and therefore are not proper Subjects of it. Such therefore as have received the *Lord's Supper*, should not come to *Confirmations*. But when things go Regularly, the Children that have been Baptiz'd, are to be brought to Church and there Catechiz'd, and instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and when they have a Reasonable Sense and Understanding of them, are to be brought to the *Bishop* and *Confirm'd*, and, after that, are, at convenient Opportunities, to receive the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*. The Church supposes them capable of this, at 16 Years of Age; some are so, before, and others not, even Years after that Age: But a certain time is to be named, and 16 is as likely an Age as any other. And they are call'd upon at that Age, because if they enter not, whilst Young, they put it off for many Years, and sometimes, do it not at all, till they come to die; whereas by entering early on this Duty, they engage betimes in a Course of Virtue and Religion, which strengthens them against the Temptations to which that warm Age is most liable, and secures them all their Lives after. This supposes also, that all young People should receive the Communion (the first time at least) from the Hands of their proper Minister, in their own Parish Church, which is a thing I would have

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have observ'd; he is indeed the best Judge of their Capacity, and of their due Preparation.

7. Is any Part of the Stock of the Church, or any Legacy Bequeathed to Pious or Charitable Uses, perverted, or concealed, or otherwise employed than was intended by the Donor, and is it in such Hands as are esteemed Responsible? And do you know of any Augmentations of Vicarages or Curacies? When were they made, and by whom are they Registred, and made as Records, as the Law requires?

7. A Man cannot falsify his Trust, with more Injustice and Wickedness in any Instance, than in perverting and concealing the *Legacies* bequeath'd by good People, to the Benefit of Parishes, and Charitable Uses; nor does any thing so discourage the *Living*, from designing and performing these good Works, like the seeing the Charitable Benefactions of the *Dead*, abused or misemployed, if not converted to private Use. No Man can therefore exercise his Zeal, or take Pains on a better Occasion, than in seeing all such Gifts and Legacies employed and put to the Uses intended by the Donors; and in detecting all such Works of Darkness, as would frustrate and make void the good Intentions of those Pious Benefactors. The *Church-wardens* must therefore bestir

bestir themselves, and see that in every Parish, there be a good Book, wherein the *Names* of their *Benefactors* are enrolled: The *Time* when they died; the *Clauses* or *Parts* of their *Wills*, by which they bequeathed either *Money*, *Land*, or *Houses*, carefully transcribed, and well attested; together with a full Account *where* those *Houses* and *Lands* lie; and what they are truly worth; how bounded, and in whose *Hands* they are, and were. But they must take especial care of *Money* (which is more perishable, and liable to loss than either *Land* or *Houses*) that it be put into such *Hands*, as are secure and most responsible; they must trust no Man's *Word* or *Promise*, but must have *Bond*; they must let it continue in no Man's Hand, for fear, or Friendship, without such *Security* as the *Laws* allow, and require. All these things should be fairly written, that they may be known to all that are concern'd, and be *Instructions* to the succeeding *Trustees*, and indeed to all *Posterity*. These things are to be well look'd after, and the *Church-wardens* must *present* according to the particular *Branches* of this *Article*; And, if they should be negligent, the *Clergy* will, I hope, discover what they know of these *Particulars*; that we may, all of us, use our best *Endeavours*, to discountenance all *Unrighteous Dealings*, and secure the *Benefactions* of those who are gone before, according to their good *Intentions*, and encourage *Others* to do the like.

8. Are there any *Wills* of *Persons* Deceas'd, Concealed, or Unproved?

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9. Are

9. Are any Goods of Persons Dying Intestate, Administred without lawful Authority?

8, 9. The *Concealing*, and *not proving* of *Wills*, will always make it suspicious, that some Injury is intended to be done to some Parties, that are concern'd: For he who intends honestly, *cometh to the Light*; and what he does will bear the Light. The Deceased had a Right to dispose of what was theirs, to what Persons, and in what manner they saw fit. 'Tis therefore a piece of great Injustice to deprive them of this Right, and 'tis downright stealing from those to whom the Deceased had left any thing, to deprive them of that advantage, by *concealing a Will*, and to transfer it to other People who have no Right to it; this is robbing both the *Dead* and *Living*. The *not proving a Will*, does not always intend or do the same Mischief as *concealing* it, for the Parties concern'd, may have the Advantages intended them in the *Will*, tho' the *Will* is not *proved*, to save Charges. But tho' this may sometimes happen, yet the Law would leave no place for fraud and underhand dealing, and therefore knows no difference betwixt *concealing a Will*, and *not proving it*: And how shall any one come to know, whether he is, or is not concern'd in such a Man's Goods or Estate, but by the *Probate* of his *Will*, which is a *Publick Act*, and done by a *Publick Officer*, to which all People may recur, without enquiring of an *Heir* or *Executor*, whose interest it may be to keep them ignorant? There is also room for great Injustice to be done, by Persons taking upon them to *Administer* the Goods of such as die without *Wills*, who have no Authority

thority to do so; this the Law would remedy, by putting it into the Hands of the *Ordinary* and his *Officers* to give out *Letters of Administration*, to such as have most right to them, and who are likeliest to administer with most Justice and Honesty. And the Laws making these Officers accountable for their Male-administration, there is a great deal of Reason, that no Body else should take upon them, to do their Work, without Authority. To do all Right therefore, both to the Living and the Dead, the *Church-wardens* are to *present* all such, as they know, or hear, by common fame, have either conceal'd any *Will*, or have not proved any *Will*, or have administered the Goods of any one who died without a *Will*, without lawful Authority, empowering them to do it.

10. Are there any who refuse to Pay their Rates to the Repair of the Church, and providing Books and other Necessaries for the Service of Almighty God?

10. There is no need of shewing the Reasonableness of all Peoples contributing to the bearing a *Common Burthen*, it is of it self, so plain; there should not therefore be so much trouble given to the Officers, as I hear there is in collecting these Duties: But since nothing else will make these People wiser, *Presentments* must.

11. Are there any in your Parish, whom you know to be common Swearers, Curfers, or Drunkards, or to live in Fornication, Adultery, or Incest, or to lie under the common Fame of such horrid Crimes?

11. Few or no People want to be convinced, that these are great and odious Sins, and fit to be punish'd, as *Job* says, by the Judge. The Guilty do not, that I hear of, defend their own Practices; nor is there any Advocate appears on their behalf; the Judges, I believe, Ecclesiastical and Secular, are ready and inclin'd to punish, and the Laws have taken all care imaginable to give them Power. From whence, then, can proceed the Impunity of these Offenders? Why, only, from the want of Accusers. This is part of the Church-wardens Office, and I know not how they will acquit themselves of a great deal of Guilt, and of partaking of other Peoples Sins, but by presenting such as they know are guilty of these provoking Offences; or such as by common Fame lie under such Imputations. Great indeed is the Envy and Malice of some People; and great is the Carelessness of others, in their Behaviour; and others are of weak Judgment, and over Credulous, and apt to take up things by halves, and to misconstrue many others, and willing to find out faults. And from these Springs arise a great many Calumnies and Slanders, that spread an evil fame, on many People that are innocent: and therefore care is to be taken that Credit be not given to loose and idle Reports,

Reports, nor every thing that is said to Peoples prejudice be look'd upon as *common Fame*, or a ground of Accusation: But when there is so much Reason, as moves good and honest People to believe and report such things of their Neighbours, who are not otherwise apt to take up Slanders, and ill Speeches against them, there is then Reason enough to present upon *Common Fame*. For, Scandal and Offence are apt to arise where such Reports go current, without Control or Notice taken, by such as are concern'd to look after such Offences. And after all, as bad as the World is, there are but few, who are reputed *Common Swearers, Cursers, or Drunkards*, or who are said to live in *Fornication, Adultery, or Incest*, that are *altogether* wrong'd by *Common Fame*: The Conduct of such People must be very faulty indeed, that gives occasion to such Reports, when there is no true Cause for them; and even for *that*, they are Responsible.

TITLE III.

Concerning Church-wardens and Parish-Clerks.

I. **A**Re your Church-wardens Chosen every Year, according to the Law and Custom of the Parish?

I. The Office of a *Church-warden*, if well discharged, is not only of great use, but carries a considerable deal of trouble with it; and therefore, except some few
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Priviledg'd Persons, no one is, ordinarily, exempted from bearing it. They are chosen every Year, that no one should be too long burthened with it; and tho' some Men hold it for two, or three, or more Years, yet they are to be sworn anew into it, every Year, and if they are not so, are not *legal* Church-wardens. They must be chosen every Year in *Easter-week*, by the Minister and Parishioners; but if they cannot agree, or if the Custom has been otherwise, the Minister chooses *one*, and the Parish *another*, and in some Places, *both* are chosen by the Parish.

2. Have the former Church-wardens given up their Accounts, and delivered the Money, or what else they had belonging to the Church, into the Hands of the present Church-wardens?

2. That the Old *Church-wardens* should give up their *Accounts*, and deliver what *Money* and *Church-Utensils* they have, into the Hands of their Successors, is very Reasonable, not only to shew they have been honest and faithful Stewards for the Parish, but that the Parishioners may see how the *Rates* and Sums of Money gathered from them, have been expended and laid out; and know, either what they still owe, or what is left over and above for the New *Church-wardens*. These Accounts are for the Satisfaction of the Parish, for the Credit and Discharge of the Old Officers, and for help and Information to the New: And where they are neglected to be given up, the People will have great Reason to think themselves cheated and ill used.

3. It

3. Is fine White-Bread, and wholesome Wine provided against every Communion, according to the Number of the Communicants, by the Curate and Church-Wardens, at the Charges of the Parish?

3. I understand that in some places of this Diocese, there hath been a Custom, that the *Minister* should be put to provide *Bread and Wine* for all the Communicants at *Easter*, which are probably more, than communicate all the Year besides, to his very great Expence. I am sure there could be no Reason good enough to introduce such a Custom at first, nor is there any good enough to continue it on; and therefore *I resolve to have it alter'd*, as being expressly against the *Rubrick*, and the *Laws of the Land*. I have reason to think the Custom is not of long date or standing; but be it of what date it will, it is, and always was *Oppression*; why must the Clergy of those Places, be so ill distinguish'd from the rest of their Brethren throughout Her Majesties Dominions? For such a Custom prevails *no where else*. I wonder how the Clergy came to suffer, or submit to it, at first, and did not use the Remedy that God had put into their Hands, namely the *Law*, to repel such an *Injustice*: But it must be suffered no longer; the last Law is not yet fifty Years old, that (by confirming the *Rubrick*) expressly says, *The Bread and Wine for the Communion, shall be provided by the Curate, and the Church-wardens, at the Charges of the Parish.* And the *Rubrick*

Rubrick just before supposes the same thing—*And if any of the Bread and Wine remain unconsecrated, the Curate shall have it to his own Use.* If the Curate (which in all these places is the *Rector*, or *Vicar* to whom the Cure of the Parish is committed) were supposed to find the Bread and Wine at his own Charges, how improper had it been, to have given him what no one else could have any Right to? Whereas 'tis now given him, altho' it was indeed the *Parishes*, who paid for it. And if it be affirmed, that this Custom only relates to the finding the Bread and Wine at *Easter*, let it be answered, that the Law makes no difference betwixt *Easter* and *Whitsontide*, or any other time: For, the very next *Rubrick* that follows says.—*And Note, That every Parishioner shall communicate, at the least, three times in the Year, of which, Easter to be one; and therefore commands the Bread and Wine to be furnish'd at the Charges of the Parish, at Easter as much as at any other time.* The Church-wardens therefore, will, I hope, be quickly convinced, how unrighteous such a Practice is, and how directly contrary to the Law of the Land; and do herein as they ought to do, and as all the *Parishes* in *England* do, and always have done: And, if they will not, must expect to be proceeded against, according to Law, with all severity.

4. Have you a Parish-Clerk of the Age of 21 Years, of Sober Life, and well Qualified for his Office?

5. Is he Paid his accustomed Salary, Dues, and Perquisites, belonging to his Place?

6. Doth

6. Doth he keep the Church clean, and carefully look to the Books, and all Things committed to his Charge?

7. Doth he Open and Shut the Church Doors at due Times, and Toll the Bell, or Bells, at the usual Hours before Prayers, that People may have sufficient warning to come to Church?

4, 5, 6, 7. 'Tis very fit that all who any ways relate to the Church, be of sober Life, and rightly qualified for their Office. The *Parish-Clerks* were heretofore in some low sort of *Orders*, and had their part in *assisting* at the Divine Service, and they still keep the Name of *Clerici*, and ought to be of exemplary and good Behaviour. And if they discharge their Office well, especially that part of it of *keeping the Church clean*, they will deserve, and ought to have their Salary duly paid, and none of their accustomed Perquisites withheld. But if they are negligent, or slovenly in their Churches, or live not soberly, they are to be *presented*, and, if they are found incorrigible, they are to be *removed* from their Places, to make room for those who will live, and do their Business better.

TIT. IV.

*Concerning the Churches and Chappels,
with their Possessions and Utensils.*

1. **I**S your Church or Chapel, with the Chancel, and Tower, or Steeple, in good Repair, and decently kept within and without?

2. Is the Roof well covered, the Windows well glaz'd, and the Floor kept well Pav'd, plain and even?

1, 2. The Building, Repairing, and Adorning Churches, was heretofore esteemed so meritorious a part of Religion, that our Forefathers had but little need of being constrain'd to look after it, by *Laws* and *Injunctions*. I do believe they sometimes placed too much Confidence in such Works, and look'd upon them as *Attonements* for great Offences. But what then? Is it not still an Indication of an excellent Devotion, and of a Mind that truly honours God, and intends to promote his Service, to lay out Money upon such Occasions? There is nothing draws so near to Superstition, as an unreasonable dread of it. When the Rulers of the *Jews* would move our Saviour, in behalf of the

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Centurion's Servant, they come to him and tell him---
He loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue,
 Luke 7. 5. And any one may foretel, without the
 Gift of Prophecy, that unless this bountiful good pub-
 lick Spirit, prevail a great deal more among us, and be
 more encouraged; an hundred Years will bring to the
 Ground a huge Number both of our *Temples* and our *Sy-
 nagogues*. In the mean time, all care imaginable must be
 taken, to keep them up in good Repair; that Men
 may serve God with Security, with Decency, and
 Cleanliness, and in the best Order; which things con-
 tribute, more than People think of, to the raising and
 maintaining their Devotion: --There is one thing, I
 observe, in the Churches I have seen among you, that
 wants to be amended; and that is, the great *Unevenness*
 of the *Floors*, occasion'd by the frequent *Burials* in the
 Churches. The way to remedy this, is to make it
 more *chargeable*, to break up Ground in Churches, than
 it now is; let such a *Rate* be set upon it, as will be
 sure to pay for the Work of making the Ground even;
 and this, in time, may repress the Vanity and Pride
 (for such undoubtedly it is, in mean People) of bury-
 ing the Dead within the Churches; a thing the Antient
 Christians forbore to do, for more than 600 Years, not
 only out of *Reverence* to those Places that were sacred
 to the Service of God; but out of *Prudence* also, that
 the *Dead* might not annoy the *Living*. However, till
 inconvenient Customs can be *broken*, let us make it as
 hard as we can to *keep* them.

3. Is your Church-yard sufficiently Fenced?

4. Hath any one encroached upon it, or cut down any Trees that were growing therein?

5. Have any Bells, Lead, Timber, or other Materials of your Church, or Chapel been embezell'd, and by whom?

3, 4, 5. The *Church-yard* was first inclosed, and consecrated, to be the Common *Burial-place* of the Dead, and therefore is to be carefully fenced and look'd after, that no Indecencies may be committed in it, by such Beasts as are apt to root up the Earth, and sometimes uncover Dead Bodies. It is the *Freehold* of the *Incumbent*, and therefore must not be *incroached upon*; The *Trees* are planted there for Ornament, and Shelter, and for Repairing of the *Chancel*, and therefore are not to be cut down for any other use. The embezelling of any Church-Materials, is just as much mischief and damage to the Parish, as they must be put to to purchase the like, and therefore such Injustice, ought in all Reason, to be *presented*, in order to be *prosecuted*.

6. Have

6. Have you a decent Font of Stone in your Church, for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism?

6. People were at first (especially if there was any great number of them) baptized in Rivers, Brooks, Ponds, or other Waters that they met with accidentally. But if single Persons, or private Families were to be Baptized, 'tis very likely it was done in private Houses, in some convenient Place, or Vessel. St. Paul seems to have been so Baptiz'd himself, *Acts* 9. 17. and so to have Baptiz'd the Converted *Jailor* and his Household, *Acts* 16. 33. and in all likelihood, it was generally so in times of Persecution; the Christians (tho' bold to Death, when there was any necessary Call, and just Occasion) never causelessly provoking their Adversaries, either *Jews* or *Gentiles*, by publickly performing their Offices, when they could do it privately, with safety and the same advantage. But when God had turn'd the Hearts of the Governors towards them, and the *Empire* was in the Hands of *Christians*, they had liberty to do as they would, and they built great and costly *Baptisteries* (or places to baptize in) sometimes adjoyning to, sometimes near, the great Churches; and by degrees came to set up *Fonts* in the manner we now have them, within the Church Doors; they were usually made of *Marble*, or the *hardest Stone* they could get, as well for Cleanliness, and Preservation, as that the Consecrated Water should not be sucked up by a Spongy, or less solid Vessel.

7. Have

7. Have you a decent Table, commodiously placed in the Chancel, for the Celebration of the Holy Communion, with a decent Carpet always over it, and a fair Linen Cloth to cover it when there is a Communion ?

8. Have you a Silver Chalice, with a Cover, and a Flaggon of Pewter, or purer Mettal for the Wine, and also a Silver Plate for the Bread, with a fair Linnen Cloth to cover the Consecrated Bread and Wine ?

7, 8. All People who are seriously affected with the Matters of Religion, do immediately fall into this Reckoning, that the greatest and most mysterious Duties of it, are to be performed, not only with the greatest Veneration and *Aw of Mind*, but with the greatest *outward* Honour and *Solemnity*. This Conclusion is, in it self, but reasonable and just ; and yet, unless it be restrain'd, with great Prudence, it will grow into great Extravagance, and wonderful excess. The indulging to this thought had (in the Days of our Forefathers) loaded the *Altars* of the Churches with *Silver, Gold,* and *Precious Stones* ; cloathed the *Priests* with the finest and most costly *Linnen*, and embroidered *Vestments* ;
and

and fill'd their *Wardrobes* with such Wealth, that, probably, the very hope of spoiling them, was a Temptation to their Adversaries. In a word, the *Blessed Sacrament* was attended with so many gorgeous and surprizingly glittering Circumstances, that the good, plain, simple Duty, seem'd to be lost and smother'd with its own Pomp, and Ornaments. The *Reformation* set these Matters right again; restored Religion to its liberty, and free breathing, and ordained the Celebration of these holy Mysteries, in such a serious sober manner, so void of all unnecessary Pomp, and Ostentation, that a Man must have but little sense of *decency* and *fitness*, that is offended at it, on the score of *Ceremony*. Nothing but decency, and cleanliness is here enjoyn'd; and I am thoroughly ashamed to think this cannot be obtain'd in many Places. What shall we say, when the Vessels of the *Lord's House* are of so course a Mettal, that many People of the Parish could not eat and drink out of the like, *at home*? Let *David* speak to them, as he did to *Nathan*, 2 Sam. 7. 2. *See now, I dwell in an House of Cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within Curtains.* He was ashamed of it, and presently resolved to build a *Temple*. Some such Religious Ingenuity, will, I hope, at one time or another, provide becoming Receptacles for the *Sacred Symbols*, in places where that care is not already taken. But, what is wanting in *Cost*, let it be made up in *Cleanliness*. If the *Paten*, and the *Chalice* be not *Silver*, let them be *bright*, and *sweet*, however. Let the *Table* be decent; it is, on these Occasions, the *Lord's Table*. Let it be always covered with a decent *Carpet*; and when there is a Sacrament, with a *fair Linen Cloath*, with a fine Napkin also to cover the consecrated Elements; not to conceal them from the Peoples Eyes, or make these things *mysterious*; but to beget Respect,

64 *Articles of Enquiry, &c.*

Respect, and a degree of Seriousness in their Minds on these Occasions, and to prevent some inconvenient Accidents. It is not, I think, enough, to say, that People are to approach this Holy Table, with *clean Hands, and pure Hearts*—But there is all the need imaginable of raising up their Minds, quickning their Devotion, kindling their Affection, and fixing their Attention, at these solemn times, by all the innocent and artful Methods we can think on; to which I know of nothing that contributes more, than the performance of these Rites, in grave serious manner, in decent order, and with all the care and cleanliness that can be used.

9. Is there a convenient Reading-Desk and Pulpit?

10. Is there a comely Surplice provided and Washed at the Charge of the Parish?

11. Have you a large Bible of the last Translation, with Two Common-Prayer-Books, both in *English* and *Welsh*?

9, 10, 11. As to the reading Prayers in *English*, or *Welsh*, I refer you to what I have said concerning *Preaching*, Tit. I. A. 5. The Edification of the *most* is ever to be first in the Minister's Consideration.

12. Have

12. Have you a Register-Book in Parchment ?

13. Are all Persons who are Christened, Married, or Buried in your Parish duly Registered therein from time to time ?

12, 13. The *Registering* Peoples *Christnings*, *Marriages*, and *Burials*, hath often proved of great and useful Consequence. It hath help'd to determine Peoples *Age*; the Legitimacy of their *Birth*; and certainty of their *Marriage*, which otherwise might have been disputed; it hath intitled People to certain *Benefits*, that were appropriated to such and such *Places*, *Towns*, *Hundreds*, or *Counties*; and it is, if kept with Care, and according to the Injunctions of the Canons, admitted for *good Evidence*, in Law : And moreover the Minister knows, by this Book, when People are Old enough to be call'd upon to prepare for the *Communion*. It is in truth of so much Use, that 'tis some wonder how it came not to be publickly enjoyn'd till 1538 or thereabouts. They must have had something or other like it, before that time; for, many and notable Matters could not possibly be decided, without such *Certificates*.

14. Is the House of your Rector or Vicar, with the Barns, Stables, and all the Out-houses kept in good Repair ?

66 Articles of Enquiry, &c.

14. I have already spoken to the keeping the Incumbent's *House* in good Repairs, *Tit. I. A. 2.* But I can pass by no Opportunity of insisting again upon it; it is so fit, so reasonable, so just, and necessary a Tie upon all Clergymen, that if they have any sense of Honesty, or Gratitude to their Religious Founders and Benefactors, they will carefully discharge their Obligation: and have the same Regard to their *Successors*, which their *Predecessors* had, or should have had, to *Them*. By our Ecclesiastical Law the Bishops are required—*To put the Clergy in mind of keeping their Houses in sufficient Reparations.* But what if they neglect to do as they are bid? Why, *if they do it not in two Months time, the Bishop is to take care (by Sequestration of their Benefices) that it be done out of their Profits.* *Othob. f. 55.2.* But to save the Bishop and the Incumbent this trouble, it were much better, the Clergy would follow the *Injunctions* of King *Edw. VI.* in 1547, and the same repeated in 1559 by Queen *Elizabeth*, and *set aside the fifth part of their clear Revenue for this purpose*, till all were finished, and afterwards to maintain them in good Condition, which a much less proportion would do. It has been resolved by the Judges in the *King's-Bench*, 12 *Jac. I.* that *Dilapidation is a sufficient Cause of Depri- vation.* I should be loath to find a Man fit to be made an Example, of this kind; but truly, I intend to look with much less pity on this Fault, than on many others; because I see that *Pity* to the present Incumbent, may very easily become *Cruelty* to his Widow, if she be sued by his Successor, and he recovers Damages of her; or great *hardship* to that Successor, if he recovers none, and finds his House in a ruinous Condition.

15. Has any Money been left, or paid by any One, to repair the Incumbent's House, which has not been employed to that Use and Purpose?

15. A Man would be unpardonable, who should sue for *Dilapidation-Costs*, and should not expend, upon the Premises, what he recovered on that Score: He has *two Years* time allowed to do it in; but, after that, he forfeits to the *Queen* double to what was recovered but not applied to the proper use: If any such Fraud or Negligence be known, the Party guilty of it, is to be *presented*.

16. Have you a perfect Terrier in Parchment, specifying all Lands, Meadows, Orchards, Gardens, Tenements, and Cottages belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage, and shewing what Tithes, Portions of Tithes, or other Profits within and without your Parish, do belong unto the same?

17. Is one Copy of such a Register kept by the Minister of your Parish, and another delivered into the Bishop's Registry?

68 *Articles of Enquiry, &c.*

16, 17. The decay of *Houses, Barns, and Stables*, is a thing that falls under the Eye and Observation of all People that pass by them, and is therefore easily complained of, and may be prevented, or be made amends for; but the Incroachment upon *Lands, Orchards, and Gardens*, may be done so insensibly, and by degrees, that even the Party injured may not be immediately aware of it; or an Incumbent may by Compact, or at least Connivance, take no notice of it; and so it passes from his Successors, without Recompence, and without Remedy, if it be not timely discovered. To prevent these Damages, and Diminutions of the Churches Revenue (whether they be occasion'd by the Incumbent's Negligence or Naughtiness) it is required, that an Exact and well attested *Terrier* be made of all Lands, Meadows, Orchards, &c. belonging to the Parsonage or Vicarage; and shewing what Tithes, Portions of Tithes, or other Profits within and without the Parish, do belong to the same. One Copy of this is to be put into the Hands of the *Register* of the *Diocese*, and another to be kept by the Incumbent of the Parish, and delivered to his Successors, for their continual Use and Information. I will take this Occasion to advise the Clergy of this Diocese, to write down all the Observations they shall make, in the Course of their Ministry, concerning their *Houses, Gleabs, Tythes, Modus's*, or whatever else they think useful and fitting to be known, and transmit them in a Book, to those who are to follow them; that they may give them all the Light they can, and prepare them against the Practices of a Set of Men, that are always apt and ready to impose on their *New Minister*. This I only say by way of Advice; but for the *Terrier*, I require it without fail, and will not be satisfy'd, till it be delivered to the *Register*; that all who shall hereafter have occasion

caſion to conſult that *Office*, may be ſure to find their Satisfaction, in theſe Matters; that the Clergy may run into no inconvenience, by making New unuſual Claims themſelves, nor ſuffer the Church to be deſpoiled of what appears to have been formerly its Right, by Others. And I hope the Ignorance in which abundance of Incumbents live of theſe Matters, will convince them how needful it is, to have a *Terrier* to inform them, and to which they may appeal.

TIT. V.

Concerning Hospitals, School-maſters, Phyſicians, Chirurgeons, and Midwives.

1. **I**S there in your Pariſh any Hoſpital, Alms-houſe, or Free-School?

2. What Revenue belongs to each of them?

3. Are they Governed, and the Revenue employed according to the Will of the Donors?

1, 2, 3. Something I have ſaid already on this Head, under *Tit. II. A. 7.* But that related chiefly to *private*

private Legacies. These Articles refer to *Publick Charities*, such as *Hospitals*, *Alms-houses*, and *Free-schools*. The Enquiries are, *what is the Revenue belonging to them?* And *how it is employed?* The way in many Places of *England*, is, to have the Names of all their *Benefactors* written in a fine large, and fair Hand, and set up in handsome *Frames*, in such a part of the *Parish Church*, as is most conspicuous, and easiest to come at; where all may read—*In what Year, such a Person died, and left such a Sum of Money to such and such Uses; or, so much Land, or Houses, to this or that Purpose.* By this means, all the *Parish* come to know their publick *Benefactors*, commemorate them with praise, and glorify God for them: and by these means they come to understand, who are qualified for *Hospitals* and *Alms-houses*, and *what* their Allowance is to be, and *whence* it is to come. I think such a Custom as this might be followed very usefully, in *Wales*, it being naturally fitted to prevent the Misapplication, Abuse, or perverting of Publick Charity. But, whatever other Courses may be taken to secure the employing these Benefactions according to the Donor's *Will*, the *Bishop*, as the general Overseer of all good Works within his Jurisdiction, is to enquire, whether they are indeed employed, and used, as they ought? And to that purpose, every honest good *Church-warden*, will contribute all he can, by making honest, true and faithful Answers to these *Articles*: And should they fail, in this their Duty, I question not but the *Incumbents* will do all Justice to themselves, and Me; and indeed to all the Dead and Living, that are concern'd in these Benefactions.

4. Doth any one in your Parish Teach School publickly or privately, without License from the Ordinary?

5. Doth the School-master come to Church himself, and cause his Scholars also to come duly at the Times of Divine Service?

6. Doth he diligently Instruct his Scholars in the Church-Catechism?

7. Do any in your Parish practice Physick, or Chyrurgery, or undertake the Office of a Midwife, without License?

4, 5, 6, 7. 'Tis of great Consequence, both to the Parents, and the Children (not to mention here the Commonwealth) what sort of Men are trusted with the Education of young People. And therefore the *Laws of the Land*, which acknowledge, own, and encourage, no Other Church-Government, but what is *Episcopal* (tho' they both *tolerate*, and *defend from Penalties*, all that dissent from it, and call themselves *Protestants*) will have no *Schoolmaster*, either publick or private, but what shall be *allowed and licens'd by the Bishop*, 23 Eliz.

c. 1. §. 6. and 1 *Jam.* I. c. 4. and 14 *Cb.* II. c. 4. and *Canon.* 77. 79. and altho' these Laws are of much elder Date than the *Act of Toleration*; yet whoever shall read it carefully, will find *they* are not, in this Particular, voided and annull'd by it. *Statutes* are not removed by *Construction*, *Consequences*, or imagined *Inferences*, but by exprefs and positive *Revocation* and *Repeal* of them. And therefore no Body has yet leave to teach Scholars, but such as shall be licens'd thereto, by the *Bishop*; all Others are, and ought to be *presented*, and are as liable to Penalties as formerly they were.

TIT. VI.

Concerning Church Officers.

1. **H**ATH any Church-Officer, Register, Proctor, or Apparitor exacted more than their ordinary and legal Fees?

2. Have any of them for any Reward, Excused, or unduly Dismissed any Offender that hath been Presented?

3. Hath

3. Hath any Apparitor Cited any Person unlawfully, without a Citation first had from the Court ?

4. Hath any taken a Reward for concealing any Offence, or avoiding the Punishment of the Offender ?

5. What Commutations have you heard have been paid by Offenders, and to whom, since the last Act of Grace, in 1709 ?

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The Corruption and Exaction of *Ecclesiastical Officers* is very carefully to be looked after, presented, and pursued to Punishment. That those who are employed in correcting the Abuses, and Enormities of *Others*, may by no means escape *themselves*, if guilty. And, to this end, if any one be afraid to make a *publick Presentment* of their Offences, let them take care to give me notice in as *private manner* as they will, (but with all truth and certainty) wherein they are aggrieved ; that Order may be taken for their Redress, and the Removal of such Offenders.

HAVING gone through these *Articles* in the plainest and most useful manner I could think on, I have now a few things to say to you distinctly, *my Brethren of the Clergy*; they have not, indeed, any Relation to the *Articles* foregoing, but I fasten them to them, for the better conveyance of them, and that you might have them always by you. I have had (and shall again have, when it pleases God) occasion to Ordain *Priests* and *Deacons*, and to *Collate*, and *Institute*, to *Benefices* when they shall be vacant, in my Diocese, such as I shall judge to be duly qualified: But I must, in a great measure, depend upon the *Testimonials* of the *Clergy*, for the Virtue and good Behaviour of such as come either to be *Ordain'd* or *Instituted* by me; because I cannot be presumed to know them personally my self. My Request is therefore to you all, that before you give your Hands to any one's *Letters Testimonial*, you would seriously consider these few following Particulars.

First, Whether you are *personally* acquainted with the Party to be recommended by you; or only Subscribe upon the Credit of those you write under; and think with your selves, if this last part, be fit to offer to your Bishop, either in Conscience, or good Breeding?

Secondly, Whether, if you are personally acquainted with the Party, you are truly perswaded that he is *indeed* what you have represented him, in your *Certificate*; I do not mean in the most rigorous and exact Interpretation of Words, according to the *Letter*, but in such a fair and equitable Sense, as wise and honest People take them, and use them in their Intercourse with one another?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Altho' the Party may be honestly recommended by you, as a Person both of good Learning, and good Manners, yet whether you truly think him fitly qualified for the *Order of Priesthood*, or of a *Deacon*, or for such a *Benefice*, or *Cure*, as the *Letters Testimonial* are design'd to recommend him to. For, certainly, a Man may be a good Scholar, and a good Man, and yet not fit to be ordain'd a *Priest* or *Deacon*, by reason of some Imperfections. And a Man may be a good *Priest*, and yet not fit for such or such a *Cure*, or *Benefice*, as it may happen, upon many Accounts. I think you cannot but see the Reasonableness of considering these few things, when you are sought to, for subscribing *Testimonials*. And I would have you (if you please) imagine I am by, and wanting to be satisfied in those Demands; and that you give by your *Subscription* the same account, you would to me *in Person*. But, it were better still, if you would seriously reflect upon the Mischief you may do, and on the guilt you may contract your selves, by leading me into Mistakes, and causing me, by giving Credit to your Names, to put unworthy People into the Ministry, or to prefer unworthy Ones to *Benefices*, *Cures*, or *Schools*. How will you answer this, to God, to Me, or to the Places where these People must officiate, who may be greatly injured by these means, and that for many Years? I intreat you therefore, by the Power of these Considerations, not to suffer your selves to be corrupted, by the facility of your Temper, your Easiness and good Nature, by Importunity, by Friendship, or the Fear of any Man, nor by the hopes of receiving the like favour, to give your Name to any one's *Certificate* or *Letters Testimonial*, unless you secretly, and in your Heart, approve of what you say therein. I cannot ask less (nor do I ask

any more) than that you would not induce *Me* to believe of Men, what you do not *your selves* truly believe of them. It may be, some of you will think these Terms are hard, and hinder you from paying Acts of Friendship and Civility to one another, by making it so difficult to subscribe your Names, upon Occasion. In answer to this, I say, let *Truth* and *Justice* go along with *Friendship* and *Civility*, and then the more of them, the better. But where those things are separated, Civility to Men is Rudeness, Injury, and Mischief to Religion; and such a *Friendship of the World* is, as St. *James* tells us, *Enmity to God*. One of my Aims is indeed, hereby to have the Clergy live in Friendly awe, and Respect of one another; that they may so behave themselves both to their Brethren, and their People, that when there is occasion for a Character, it may be both unreasonable and unjust, to refuse a good one, to each other. There will be always room enough (in spite of all the care that can be taken) for the Partialities of *Acquaintance*, *Neighbourhood*, and *Inclination*, to take place, in *Letters Testimonial*; and therefore I have no apprehension of creating any misunderstanding among the Clergy, by requiring this Exactness at their Hands. I only hope to stir up such a jealousy among them, that, unless they live virtuously and studiously, they shall despair of getting their Neighbours *Hand* and Approbation, when they stand in need of it; without which, they will, in vain, attempt to make their way to any Favours I can shew them. I will always pay, you may be sure, that Deference that is due, to the Characters the Gentlemen of the *Laitie* think fit to give the *Clerks* they now and then Recommend to me. But I, who am convinced that the Clergy know each other much better, and in another manner, than most Gentlemen can do, shall never be
content

content to take a Clerk on trust, without the Testimonials of his Neighbouring *Brethren* of the *Ministry*. And therefore let it be a Rule among you, that you make your selves as valuable as you can, each to the Other ; for, certainly, the Esteem you shall derive from thence, will be of greatest use and service to you.

I press this matter of an honest, true, and Conscientious Subscription of *Letters-Testimonial*, with a more than common Zeal and Fervency, not only because I am obliged to do it, by the *Canons*, and *Injunctions* of my *Superiour Metropolitane*, but from a little Indignation I have also had, to find my self presented with some *Certificates*, well sign'd and seal'd indeed, but which I thought, had little Regard to truth in them. I have forgotten, and shall to all Intents and Purposes forget, those Names, if they do not refresh my Memory by coming again in my way upon the like false Errand : I promise my self they never will ; and hope that when ever you subscribe your Names to *Letters-Testimonial*, you will not fail to make some Conscience (as we say) of imposing on your *Bishop* ; who has it in his Heart (and bows his Knees, in Thanks, to Him that put it there) to do you all the good he can, according to the measure of his Skill and Power.

Another thing, wherein I would require your Care and Caution, is in the matter of *Titles*. A Bishop is not allowed by the *Canons*, to ordain any One, without a *Title*, *i. e.* unless he has a Right to some means of Livelihood and Subsistence either by an Estate in his own Hands, or by way of Recompence for doing Duty. If He neglect this Rule, he is, it seems, obliged to provide the Party so Ordain'd some Place in the Church, and to furnish him with all Necessaries till he has done it, *Can.* 33. The Wisdom of this Rule may appear, in part, by the

the Infamy and-Scandal, which those few miserable Men bring upon the Church, who stroll about the World like Impudent and Vagrant Beggars; and shew their *Orders* for a *Pass*, to license them as it were, to do their Sacred Function all the dishonour they can; this *Canon* would prevent these Scandals, in great measure, by forbidding such to be ordain'd, who have no present settled maintenance, nor are in any near and reasonable prospect of one. You know the Bishop of *this Diocese*, is so great a *Patron*, that you can hardly bring a *Title*, for *Ordination*, but it must be the certainty of some *Curacy*, within his Patronage. Now I am very well assured, that not one *Third part* of the Benefices (I would I could not say *Half*) within my Jurisdiction, can bear the Charge of keeping a *Curate*; I would not therefore have the *Rectors*, or the *Vicars* of such poor Benefices pretend to give a *Title* of *Curate*, when every Body knows they have much to do to live themselves, upon their Profits. Age and Infirmities, and long continued Absence, must indeed be evermore considered, as Reasons for the keeping Curates, even in small and poor Parishes; but those are Cases that cannot lie concealed from me. Where nothing of this happens, I intend not to admit such Promises of Curacies, for *Titles*. In a word, whatever *Titles* are offered to me for *Orders*, shall be *Real Titles*. They who certify to me, that they admit such or such a One, to be their *Curate*, shall certainly have him for their *Curate*, and shall pay him as their *Curate*, and that, not for the present turn, a *Week*, or *Month*, or *Quarter*, but as long as I shall judge convenient. For since 'tis this *Collusion* that helps, above all other ways, to overstock the Church with Labourers, I think we cannot guard too much against it, where they are so little wanted. I desire, therefore, all that are concern'd,

cern'd, as well *Rectors* and *Vicars*, as those who shall come to be *Ordain'd*, to take this Intimation for a timely warning, what *Certificates* they send or bring to me; for I have told them what I will accept, and what shall find no place with me; and after this, they will owe their Disappointments to themselves, if they come not rightly qualified. I do also require them to give me a *Fortnight's* notice before the *Ordination Sunday*, that I may have time to enquire about them; and, together with this Notice, to send me their *Age*, *Country*, *College*, *Degree*, and the *Place* where they have last lived, together with *Letters Dimissory*, if they belong to any other *Diocese*.

Another thing I have to mention to you, is, That all who are not *discharged* by *Act of Parliament*, from paying *Tenths*, should do it punctually, *every Year*, at the Time appointed. It was, before, an *Act of Justice*, and to be paid like other stated *Taxes*: But now it is become (through the unexampled Goodness of the *Queen*) an *Act of Charity* also to our poor *Brethren* of the *Clergy*, to whose Relief and Comfort it is designed and given. That *Royal Bounty* is, every Day, preparing, by wise Methods, to be made most useful and extensive. And I gladly take this Opportunity, of acquainting you, in short, how that Affair stands; that you may no longer wonder, nor causelessly complain, that the *Fruits* of so excellent a Design have hitherto appear'd so *small*. It is, I assure you, through no ones Fault, or Negligence: There is neither want of good Will, nor of Application, in the Parties concern'd, to whom these Matters are entrusted; but a most Noble and Religious Zeal appears, to answer the good Purposes for which they are incorporated. The yearly Revenue of the *First-fruits* and *Tenths*, did usually (at a

Medium .

Medium of 20 Years) amount to about 17000 l. *per Annum*. But this was charged with *Grants*, and *Pensions* (and many of them *for Life*) to the amount of about 11000 l. *per Annum*, besides an *Arrear* of upwards of 20000 l. which was to be discharged, and has for some Years last past been, and is still discharging. From this Revenue there has been a Deduction made of something more than 3000 l. *per Annum*, by discharging the *Tenths* of as many *Small Livings* (under 50 l. *per Annum*) as amounted to that Sum. So that the 17000, is reduced to 14000, out of which the *Grants* and *Pensions* must be paid, which, by Death, and other prudent Methods of the Governours, are now also reduced to between 9 and 10000 l. *per Annum*. So that, allowing a Decrease of *First-fruits*, by the foresaid Discharge of *Small Livings*, the *Governours* will not have (according to the best Computation I can make) above 3000 l. *per Annum* to dispose of, till it pleases God to order otherwise. This is the State of the Revenue, when I have added, that there is a Debt of some Thousand Pounds to be recovered by the Governours, in some Reasonable Time. Now, whoever can consider the *Incumbrances* that lay, and yet do lie, upon this Revenue, and can conceive how intricate and perplexed, Accounts of so many Years standing must needs be, and how difficult a thing it is, to settle great Designs of *Charity*, in such a Method, at first, as shall not quickly call for Repentance and Alteration—Whoever can put these things together, will easily account for the *Time* that has already been spent, and for the *little effect* this gracious Benefaction of the *Queen* may seem as yet to have taken. Assure your selves, *my Brethren*, that where so many different Rules, and Methods, are, and must have been offered, and so many particular things of

of weight to be considered, before a Settlement can possibly be made to any purpose, the more time it takes in doing, the better it will certainly be done, when done. Delays, in this case, are not dangerous, but tend to more security. But, methinks, I need not make an Excuse, for the little that has been done ; the Discharge of as many Livings from paying *Tenths*, as amounts to more than 3000 l. *per Annum*, is the having already given (at 20 Years Purchase) upwards of *Sixty thousand Pounds* to the Poor Clergy. God, of his Goodness, return it, into her Royal Bosom, Sixty thousand fold ! This I have observ'd to you, a little (as it were) out of my Way. The thing I at first intended was, to advise you to be punctual in your Annual Payments of *Tenths*, because this great and good Design will depend very much upon the ready Payment of our Dues at the appointed time. And also because I intend, neither my *Self*, nor my *Executors*, shall run any hazard, by your *Delays*, or *Nonsolvency*. Whoever shall not punctually discharge his *Tenths* shall very punctually be return'd *Nonsolvent* to the *Exchequer*, and take his Fortune there. I have known such ill Effects of Pity, wrong placed, on these Occasions, that I will not venture them. And I hope this warning will suffice to prevent all such Miscarriages.

There is another thing, which I am going to desire of you, in which, I will own, my *Curiosity* has a great share ; but which, I hope, may, some time or other, tend also to the Benefit of some Parishes. I desire to know the true *Names* of your Parishes, and if there be more Names than One. The *Saints* to whose Memory they were dedicated, and what Day the *Wakes* (if there be any) are kept. What *Superstitious Usages* are still ob-

served by the Common People, under the Name of *Antient Customs*. How many *Families* there may be in the Parish, and what the Number of Communicants at *Easter* (in these things, I look not for exactness, but according to a reasonable way of reckoning, and general guesses.) How many *Townships*, what their *Names*, and to whom the *Tythes* of them are paid, and their reputed *Valuation per Annum*. And if you have any remarkable *Monuments* in your Churches, I should be glad you would transcribe them for me, at your leisure. These things, I hope, will not put you to much pains, to write in a Sheet of Paper, and offer them to me, at the *Visitation*; as also whatever you shall think fit to communicate to me, which you would not *publickly* present or complain of; if you Seal them up, I will take care they shall be still *Seal'd* to all besides my self, till it be fit to make them manifest, and, even then, it shall be to no one's prejudice.

I have now a few things to say to you, in *general*, and shall then put an end to these Papers. And,

First, I cannot choose but hope that you do, every Day, either at Church, or at your Houses offer to God, the continual Sacrifice of *Prayer* and *Thanksgiving*, as well for the long Life, and Health, and Preservation, and Prosperity of the *Queen*, as also for the manifold good Gifts, Virtues, and Graces, that we see Her exercise continually, and daily improving in. This we should, all of us, do, did Conscience of our *Duty*, only move us; but Her Deservings towards *Us*, are such, that *Gratitude* and *Sense of Justice* will constrain us to add all Zeal and Fervour possible to our Devotions. God has, indeed, made Her a *Nursing-Mother* to the *whole Nation*, and given Her the Hearts of all Her People, in

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a fuller measure, than He has to any Prince, within our Memory : But yet her Birth, her Education, her Reason, Inclination, and true Interest, must needs have fill'd her Heart, with all the favourable Prepossessions to *the Church of England* (above all) that even that Church could want, or wish for. And therefore, sure the Clergy of *that Church* will evermore be trying to distinguish it self, by Acts of Love, and Duty, and Obedience to her, if it be possible, above all other Subjects. Not in exalting Her *Prerogative* above what our *Constitution* allows; nor in asserting a *Power*, to which *the Laws of the Land* are Strangers, and know nothing of, (for that, *my Brethren*, is as well a *Snare* to *Princes*, as an *Entanglement* to *Subjects*) but in pressing, upon all Men, a dutiful and conscientious Obedience to *Her Laws*; by which the Honour and the Safety of Her Person and Government are best preserv'd. It is not for *Princes* to side with any *Party*, but to make use of all. They are the *Common Parents* of their Country, and will dispence their *Justice* with an equal hand to all; but they who best *deserve*, will share their *Graces* and their *Favours* in the greatest Plenty : And that, I hope, will ever be *the Church of England*, properly so called.

You do, in the next place, pray as constantly, in course, for the Princess *Sophia*, and you know the meaning of that is, for the Succession of the *Protestant Line*, in the Illustrious House of *Hannover*. There our *Laws*, have placed the Crown, and there our *Prayers* and our *Endeavours*, will, I hope, for ever keep it. We have had but two *Papish Reigns*, since the blessed *Reformation of Religion*; and both of them, were, God be thanked, of very short continuance : But what Alarms,

what Disturbance and Distraction did they give, what mighty Mischiefs did they do this Kingdom? The *first* of *them* did cheaply pour, like Water on the Ground, the Blood of a World of innocent and harmless People, for no other Cause, but that they could not against their Conscience, comply with *Popery*. The Laws of the Land were *then* upon the side of that Cruel false Religion, and authorized the kindling those devouring Fires, that consumed so many *Protestants*. Insomuch that if God, in his Mercy, had not shortned those Days, the Name of *the Reformation* had been no more in Remembrance. For 'tis in the Nature, 'tis interwoven in the frame and make of that furious *Superstition*, never to spare, what it calls *Heresy*, when it has the Power of destroying it: And I challenge all the World, to give an unexceptionable Instance to the contrary. Shall we ever run this Risk again? Will you not, all of you, say with me, *God forbid that we should ever try again the Mercy of a Popish Government!* I say the less of *the other Popish Reign*, because I trust to the Remembrance, and the Senses, of all Reasonable observing People. And I should despair of being much heeded, should I give any Caution for the *future*, by those who have so soon forgotten the *past* Fears and Dangers, they were in. But tho' we should incline to spare the Name of a *Prince*, to whom we once both owed, and payed the Obedience of good Subjects, and who, moreover, was the Father of *two such Queens*, yet let us never so forget those Days, as not to thank God heartily, that they pass'd away so soon; and, that the Legislative Power hath done what it could to prevent the like, for the time to come, by enacting (as by the 14th of *Elizabeth*, it appears they might) that *no Papist shall hereafter be King or Queen*

Queen of England; and settling the Succession in the *Protestant Line*. God grant it may be *very long*, before that *Act of Parliament* take place, but God forbid that any thing should ever interrupt the *Protestant Succession*. This is *the Royal Family*, that we are understood to pray for.

You do, in the last place, pray for *Bishops, and Curates, and all Congregations committed to their Charge*: And as I always try to put *my own Clergy*, in a more particular View, when I either repeat, or hear this Prayer; so I do seriously desire, that they would always have *Me* in their Minds, on the like Occasions. And since the Providence of God hath placed Me, through the Favour of the *Queen*, in the highest Order of Church-Ministers, I am sure I have thought my self the better, for being, in a more immediate manner, the Subject of so many good Peoples Prayers, as are daily offered up to God, in our Excellent *Publick Service*. We do, indeed, stand in need of all our Peoples Prayers, and all the Assistance of the Grace of God, and all that our Reason, Observation, and Experience can afford, to direct us in our Ways; for we are, methinks, encompass'd with unusual, unexpected Difficulties. Whence comes it that the Times seem so much more unequal to some Men of this *Sacred Order*, than they are to Others? From what infected Quarter does this Mischief rise? Are they not full as Learned, Virtuous, and Religious, as their Brethren, or their Predecessors? Shew they not equal Zeal for the Glory of God, the Honour of Christ's Revelation, and for the Souls of Men, the Purchase of his Blood? Walk they not prudently and circumspectly, shewing themselves *Patterns in all good things*?

things? What part of Duty is it, that they are defective in? Is Malice so restrain'd, as not to tell them of their Faults? Or are their Enemies so tender of their Credit and good Name? And yet if you should trace these Clamours to a Head, you will find they end in this poor Senseless, Accusation, that *they are not good Churchmen.* Great God! that Men of the most valuable Abilities, and learned in all kinds; beloved of all that know them, for their Candor and good Nature; famed for their Prudence, and venerable for their Piety and Goodness; of exemplary Charity; assiduous Preachers; constant Frequenters of the Common Prayers; and, in a word, who whilst they were *Parish Priests*, did every way adorn their holy Calling---That these Men, when they came to be *advanced*, should cease, immediately, to be *good Churchmen!* My Heart, I own it, is too full of Indignation and Disdain, to give a serious Answer to such Calumnies. I rather humbly beseech God, to forgive those Men, their great Trespas, who have either invented, spread, or cherish'd them. But be not you, *my Brethren*, Partakers of their Sin, by harbouring such ill Thoughts; or countenancing such Reports. *Speak not evil of these Dignities.* I know I am the unworthiest of them; but yet I bind it on your Consciences, to entertain a good Opinion of me, till you find cause to do otherwise. I shall not else be able to do any good among you. I speak not this, from any Reason or Suspicion I have that I am not as much esteemed by all of you, as I desire to be. But what can I expect? What have I not to fear, when Men of so much greater Caution, Prudence, Virtue, and Religion, fare so ill? Had *Papists* been the Spreaders of these
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these Slanders, I should not much have wondered, because they are such hearty Lovers of whatever may discredit us, or weaken our Influence, with our People, that, I account, we are obliged to them, if they only *report*, and are not the *Authors* of them. But these are not the Wounds of *Enemies*, but of *Companions*, *Friends*, and *Children*. But after all, what is the ground and occasion of this Outcry? If I can guess aright, 'tis this. The Bishops, for these 20 Years last past, have behaved themselves, with that good Temper, Moderation, and Paternal Gentleness, that they have gain'd more ground upon the Hearts of the *Dissenters*, than had been done for an hundred Years before, by all their Predecessors: And yet, they have not parted, (that I know of) with one Point of *Doctrine*; one Point of *Discipline*; one *Church* or *Chappel*; one Line of the *Common Prayer*; nor one external *Ceremony*. But it may be they *would* if they *could*. 'Tis time enough to answer those Suspicions, when better proof of their Inclination appears. I have as much Reason to say, and I do say it, that whenever they do part with any thing, belonging to the Church, my Life for yours, they will have something *equal* to it, in Exchange. They have, as yet, parted with nothing; made no Advances, no Proposals, no Concessions. They have only purchased the Reconciliation, and Benevolence of those People who dissent from our Church, by a Management that is truly Wise, and truly *Christian*. And I am verily perswaded, that the best and wisest of their Predecessors would have taken the same Courses, had the Situation of Affairs been the same, and the like Seasons and Opportunities concurr'd.

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But how does it appear, that the *Dissenters* have been gain'd upon, by this good Treatment? Allow them to be *Men*, and you will see something of what I say; for all Men love *Humanity*, and all Mens Hearts are won upon by *gentle Treatment*. But does it not appear by plainer Tokens? Have they not (many of them) manifestly changed their Stile, and way of Expression? Have they not changed their Manners and Behaviour towards Church, and Churchmen? Do their Writings seem to proceed from such a furious bitter Spirit as they used to do? Do they insist upon such rigorous Terms of Church-Communion as they formerly did? Do they treat our *Service*, or our *Ceremonies*, with the antient Scorn and Contempt? Have they not spoken decently, and respectfully of *Bishops*? I may not insist on all Particulars—I affirm, that since the Days of Queen *Elizabeth*, the Bishops of the *Church of England*, were never held in that Esteem and Value by the *Dissenters*, as they now are, and have been for these 20 Years; and that for doing nothing but what did always become Wise Men, and good *Christians* to do, so circumstantiated as they are. And is it not astonishing, that that which is, in truth, matter of Praise and Honour, should be turn'd into an Accusation? For (to come to the Point I am upon) I have never seen a better Cause assign'd, why some *Bishops* should not be thought *good Churchmen*, than that they have treated the *Dissenters* with more Condescension and less Acrimony, and have been treated by *Them*, with more Civility, Respect, and Honour, than was heretofore the Custom to do, on either side. And I leave it to all the World to judge, whether the Bishops are to change their *Conduct*, or those who blame them,

them, their *Opinion*. I meant not, by what I have said, to make an *Apology* for any of my *Brethren*, and Most honoured *Colleagues*, Dead or Living; their good Example wants not to be *justified*, but *followed* by Me. And herein I should but do, as They have done, *viz.* pursue the Advice given to the Clergy of his Province, by Archbishop *Sandcroft* in 1688----“ More especially, “ that They have a very tender Regard, to our *Brethren* “ the *Protestant Dissenters*: That, upon Occasion of- “ fered, They visit them at their Houses, and receive “ them kindly at their own; and treat them fairly “ where-ever they meet Them: persuading Them, if “ it may be, to a full Compliance, with our Church, “ or at the least, that ~~whereunto we have already at-~~ “ ~~tained,~~ we may all walk by the same Rule, and mind “ the same Thing—And that They warmly and most “ affectionately exhort Them to joyn with us in daily “ fervent Prayer to the God of Peace, for an Universal “ Blessed Union of all *Reformed Churches*, both at “ Home and Abroad, against our *Common Enemies*.

But I have said these things, to shew upon what poor Occasions, many People, who love the Order, have yet parted with their Respect for the *Persons* of their Bishops: And to caution you (for whom I am most concern'd) against the falling in, with any such unreasonable *Suspensions*. Take heed of every thing that may lessen the Respect you owe to your Superiors; for when that Band is broken, who can tell but *Hatred* or *Contempt* will follow? And then you know how little good can possibly be done, by any one. You may make it your own Case, with Respect to your private *Parishes*, and think how ineffectual all your best *Labours* would be, if your People were either prejudiced against

against your Person, or suspected you of any ill Designs.

I see I have exceeded the Bounds I had set my self; but my Zeal for so much injured Worth, hath occasioned it, and must excuse the length. I neither am, nor have at any time been concern'd, my self, in any of those Affairs, or Controversies, that have occasion'd the Divisions, and Distinctions, that have so long troubled Us. But I have not been an Unconcern'd Spectator of the Mischiefs they have done; nor can I help the apprehending, with pain, the Mischiefs that they will go on doing to the End. And in that View, I could not refrain from warning every one of you, from having any Hand in cherishing and keeping these Divisions up, amongst us.

God of his infinite Goodness, grant, that you and I, and every one of us, may every Day we live, remember the Relation we bear to each other, and to the Flocks committed to our Care, and so attend to the Discharge of our good Office, that when the Shepherd and the Bishop of our Souls shall call us to account, each for the Other, we may do it with Joy, and not with Grief.

Westminster,

Febr. 16.

17th.

I am your most affectionate Brother,

and humble-Servant,



W. ASAPH.

F I N I S.

